

THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH

A NEW TRANSLATION

VOLUME 137

THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH

A NEW TRANSLATION

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ST. CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA

GLAPHYRA ON THE PENTATEUCH, VOLUME 1 GENESIS

Translated by

NICHOLAS P. LUNN

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With introduction by

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AcT</i>	<i>Acta theologica</i>
AnBib	Analecta Biblica, Pontificio Istituto Biblico, Rome
<i>CCR</i>	<i>Coptic Church Review</i>
FOTC	The Fathers of the Church, Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press
<i>JTS</i>	<i>The Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NIV	New International Version
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
NKJV	New King James Version
NLT	New Living Translation
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OT	Old Testament
PG	Patrologia Graeca, ed. J.-P. Migne, Paris, 1857–66
PL	Patrologia Latina, ed. J.-P. Migne, Paris, 1878–90
<i>RA</i>	<i>Recherches augustinienes</i>
<i>VC</i>	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
Vg	Vulgate

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Encountering Cyril of Alexandria the Exegete

Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444) has not enjoyed a favorable reputation in the English-speaking world. In *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Edward Gibbon refers to Cyril as the “tyrant of Alexandria,” describing him as a ruthless politician and dogmatician.¹ In the nineteenth century, Charles Kingsley wrote a historical novel in which he laid the blame for the massacre of Hypatia, a female philosopher in Alexandria, squarely at the feet of Cyril. Although Kingsley’s “lurid rendering of the story owes more to his polemic against Edward Pusey and the Tractarian movement than to a sober assessment of the ancient sources,”² it was at least partly due to Kingsley’s novel that Cyril’s writings were omitted from a well-known series of late Victorian translations of patristic texts, the Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers.³ Depictions of Cyril as an unscrupulous politician of questionable character continue to prevail in modern scholarly treatments of the period,⁴ as well as in pop-

1. Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Volume II: 395 A.D.–1185 A.D.* (New York: Modern Library, n.d.), 825.

2. Christopher Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity: Topography and Social Conflict* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 307.

3. Andrew Louth, “Cyril of Alexandria,” in *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature*, ed. Lewis Ayres, et al. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 353; John A. McGuckin, “Cyril of Alexandria: Bishop and Pastor,” in *The Theology of St Cyril of Alexandria: A Critical Appreciation*, ed. Thomas G. Weinandy and Daniel A. Keating (New York: T & T Clark, 2003), 208 n. 9.

4. For example, in his introduction to patristic theology, Maurice Wiles describes Cyril as “unscrupulous.” See *The Christian Fathers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 77. In a popular collection of primary texts frequently used in introductory courses on the history of Christianity, William C. Placher refers to Cyril as “[a]mbitious and scheming.” See *Readings in the History*

ular accounts; a 2009 film, *Agora*, depicts Cyril as a ruthless schemer drunk with ambition.

Until relatively recently, modern English translations of Cyril focused almost entirely on his christological writings, due of course to the undeniable and pivotal role Cyril played in the development of christology during the Nestorian controversy. But however important Cyril's christological contributions, his anti-Nestorian writings comprise only a fraction of his enormous literary corpus. Had Cyril not become involved in the Nestorian controversy, it is likely that he would have been known primarily as an exegete. Of the ten volumes of J.-P. Migne's *Patrologia Graeca* that contain Cyril's works, a full seven volumes are devoted to works of biblical exegesis. These works include commentaries on Isaiah, the minor prophets, the gospel of John, a collection of homilies on the gospel of Luke preserved largely in Syriac, and numerous fragments of commentaries on both the Old and the New Testaments. Cyril also wrote two substantial commentaries on the Pentateuch, *De adoratione et cultu in spiritu et veritate* and the *Glaphyra*.

Before this century, the only English translations of Cyril's exegetical writings were done in the nineteenth century, and these included only a translation of his homilies on Luke⁵ and a two-volume translation of his commentary on John, the first volume of which is translated so literally as to be practically unreadable.⁶ In 2007, the late Robert C. Hill published the first

of Christian Theology, Volume 1: From its Beginnings to the Eve of the Reformation (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988), 71. And in a more recent collection of primary texts, Bart Ehrman and Andrew S. Jacobs, while acknowledging Cyril to be brilliant, define him principally in terms of the violent events that occurred during the early years of his episcopacy. See *Christianity in Late Antiquity 300–450 C.E.: A Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 182. In his popular book on the history of Christianity, Diarmaid MacCulloch is more nuanced in his approach to Cyril, though he still damns Cyril with faint praise: "Cyril, though unlikely to have been a pleasant man to know, was more than simply an unscrupulous party boss." See *Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years* (New York: Viking, 2009), 224.

5. *A Commentary upon the Gospel according to S. Luke* by S. Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, trans. R. Payne Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1859).

6. *Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John* by S. Cyril, Archbishop of Alexandria, vol. 1, trans. P. E. Pusey (Oxford: James Parker, 1874); *Commentary on*

of three volumes of a translation of Cyril's commentary on the minor prophets,⁷ and the remaining two volumes were released by 2012. In the following year (2008) he published three volumes of Cyril's commentary on Isaiah.⁸ In 2013 and 2015, two volumes were published of a new translation of Cyril's commentary on John by David Maxwell.⁹ Cyril's exegetical writings are therefore more accessible to a general readership than ever before, although much work remains to be done. Until now, however, there have existed no English translations of either of Cyril's commentaries on the Pentateuch. This translation of the *Glaphyra* is the first.

Broader access to Cyril's vast exegetical corpus allows for an understanding of Cyril as a theologian beyond the narrow lens of the Nestorian controversy, enabling us to see the theological ideas and concepts that animated him throughout his career, rather than just during a narrow span of time. Moreover, these texts give us a means by which to comprehend more fully the theological and societal issues of pastoral concern to Cyril as the shepherd of the church in Alexandria. They also provide us with the means by which to assess Cyril's method of exegesis, as well as to see the ways in which Cyril's theology was intertwined with his reading of scripture.

In what follows, in addition to situating the *Glaphyra* in Cyril's biographical and literary context, I will address the purpose and structure of the work, focusing particularly on what Cyril sought to draw out of the Pentateuch and why he was convinced

the Gospel according to St. John by S. Cyril, Archbishop of Alexandria, vol. 2, trans. Thomas Randall (London: Walter Smith, 1885).

7. *Commentary on the Twelve Prophets, Volume 1*, trans. Robert C. Hill (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007); *Commentary on the Twelve Prophets, Volume 2*, trans. Robert C. Hill (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008); *Commentary on the Twelve Prophets, Volume 3*, trans. Robert C. Hill (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2012).

8. *Commentary on Isaiah, Volume I: Chapters 1–14; Commentary on Isaiah, Volume II: Chapters 15–39; Commentary on Isaiah, Volume III: Chapters 40–50*, trans. Robert Charles Hill (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2008).

9. *Commentary on John, Volume 1*, trans. David Maxwell (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013); *Commentary on John, Volume 2*, trans. David Maxwell (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015).

not only that he, as a bishop, was most suited to undertake such a task but also that it was incumbent upon him to do so. I will also touch upon the most prominent theological themes and ideas articulated in the *Glaphyra*, all of which remain important themes in Cyril's corpus as a whole, and which give us a broader picture of the scope of Cyril's theology. At the same time, while the *Glaphyra* provides an important lens through which to understand Cyril's thought more fully, peppered throughout the text are deeply anti-Jewish arguments that should be troubling to modern readers. I will assess what Cyril's anti-Jewish rhetoric tells us about his understanding of Judaism and the Jewish community in Alexandria, as well as what it tells us about Jewish-Christian relations in fifth-century Alexandria.

Biography of Cyril

Born c. 378, Cyril was seven years old, the age at which children were first sent to school, when his uncle Theophilus was made archbishop of Alexandria.¹⁰ Little is known about the specifics of Cyril's early life and education, although various attempts have been made to reconstruct his intellectual and spiritual formation on the basis of our knowledge of educational structures in the fourth and fifth centuries and from Cyril's own writings.¹¹ As with other children from prosperous families, both Christian and non-Christian, Cyril's primary education would have consisted of a rigorous regimen of memorization as a means of attaining literacy and proficiency in arithmetic.¹² His secondary education would have focused on the study of classical Greek literature, including Homer, Euripides, Menander, and Demosthenes.¹³ After

10. See H. I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, trans. George Lamb (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956), 142.

11. See E. R. Hardy, "The Further Education of Cyril of Alexandria (412–444): Questions and Problems," *Spirit* 17 (1982), 116–22; John A. McGuckin, *St Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004), 4; Norman Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 5.

12. This process is described in Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, 150–59.

13. Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria*, 5; Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*,

secondary school Cyril would have undertaken higher education in rhetoric, a key facet of higher studies at the time.¹⁴ It is also likely that Cyril studied philosophy as part of his higher education.¹⁵ As Robert Grant has demonstrated, however, much of his knowledge of philosophy was mediated through Christian sources, such as Eusebius of Caesarea's *Chronicon* and *Praeparatio evangelica* and Clement of Alexandria's *Protrepticus* and *Stromata*.¹⁶ Cyril also underwent a thorough immersion in the scriptures and in the writings of the church fathers. This Cyril received through a monastic education in the desert, where he likely studied for five years between 394 and 399.¹⁷ Here he studied the scriptures in depth; I shall have more to say about Cyril's understanding of scriptural interpretation below. Relatedly, Cyril was also exposed to the writings of church fathers, including Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Didymus the Blind (who himself died in the year when Cyril likely began his formal education),¹⁸ the Cappadocian Fathers, Athanasius, Jerome, and John Chrysostom.¹⁹

161–64. For more on the classical Greek literature and Christian education, see Robert A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language: The Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), 76–81.

14. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, 194–205.

15. *Ibid.*, 206–16. Marrou here points out that philosophy was often a component of higher education.

16. Robert Grant, "Greek Literature in the Treatise *De Trinitate* and Cyril *Contra Julianum*," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 15 (1964): 265–99.

17. For more on this period of Cyril's life see Pierre Éviéux's introduction to *Cyrille d'Alexandrie: Lettres Festales, I–VI* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1991), 15–17. Éviéux's introduction provides an excellent overview of Cyril's biography.

18. McGuckin, *Christological Controversy*, 4.

19. That Cyril expresses cordial familiarity with Chrysostom is somewhat surprising given that the former accompanied Theophilus to the Synod of the Oak in 403, a synod that deposed Chrysostom from the episcopal throne of Constantinople. For more on this synod and Cyril's involvement in it, see J. N. D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom: Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 211–27, 287–88. For the influence of the other fathers listed above on Cyril's thought, particularly in terms of his exegesis of scripture, see McGuckin, *Christological Controversy*, 3; Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria*, 16; Robert Louis Wilken, "Cyril of Alexandria as Interpreter of the Old Testament," in *The Theology of St Cyril of Alexandria*, ed. Keating and Weinandy, 16; Lawrence J. Welch, *Christology and Eucharist in the Early Thought of Cyril of Alexandria* (San Francisco: Catholic Scholars Press, 1994), 10–12.

Amidst great tumult, Cyril ascended to the episcopal throne of St. Mark three days after the death of Theophilus in 412, having been groomed for the position by his uncle.²⁰ The first years following his elevation were stormy. He embarked on a campaign to seize Novatianist churches and played a role in the temporary expulsion of Jews from Alexandria after they attacked a group of Christians, about which I shall have more to say below. Moreover, as already mentioned, he was implicated in the mob violence that culminated in the slaying of Hypatia in 415. Opinion varies regarding Cyril's involvement in the latter two events. Socrates Scholasticus, a supporter of Nestorius and one of the historians upon whom we rely for our knowledge of these incidents, expresses strong animosity toward Cyril in his rendering.²¹ That Cyril was antipathetic towards heretics, Jews, and pagans cannot be gainsaid, and that these events occurred under his tenure is indisputable. As Wickham argues, however, the picture that the facts "yield is not of a fanatical priest, hungry for power, heading a howling mob, but of an untried leader attempting, and initially failing, to master popular forces."²² After his tumultuous election to the archbishopric in a city of numerous communal groups where outbreaks of violence were a prominent feature of everyday life,²³ Cyril may have wanted to consolidate his position and that of the church in Alexandria. Cyril's vocal opposition to heretics, Jews, and paganism in his early years might thus have been an expression of a sense of political vulnerability. Cyril appears, moreover, to have been incapable of harnessing violent expressions of this opposition among the Christian populace. The violent incidents of his early episcopacy may therefore speak more to Cyril's lack of prudence as a young archbishop than to his moral character, although I will address this point in greater detail below, particularly re-

20. The tumultuous circumstances of Cyril's election are recounted by Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity*, 297–98.

21. Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity*, 308; McGuckin, *Christological Controversy*, 7; Lionel Wickham, ed., *Select Letters*, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), xvi.

22. Wickham, ed., *Select Letters*, xvi.

23. See Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity*, 8–12.

garding the many references Cyril makes in the *Glaphyra* to Jews and Judaism.

Despite their tumultuousness, Cyril's early episcopal years witnessed to a substantial literary output.²⁴ Between 412, when he was consecrated as archbishop, and 423, Cyril devoted himself to extensive exegetical work. It was during this period that he composed his two major commentaries on the Pentateuch, including the *Glaphyra*; a massive five-book commentary on Isaiah; and a commentary of similar size on the minor prophets.²⁵ Between 423 and 428, the year when the Nestorian controversy erupted, Cyril focused his attention on the refutation of Arianism, perhaps as a rhetorical exercise or perhaps due to the continued influence of Arianism among simpler believers in Alexandria.²⁶ Three substantial works emerge from this period, all devoted in large part to the doctrine of the Trinity: *Thesaurus de sancta et consubstantiali Trinitate* (written between 423 and 425), *De Trinitate Dialogi* (423–25), and *In Joannem* (425–28), a twelve-book commentary on the gospel of John. Cyril probably also began *Contra Julianum* during this period, a work written as a refutation of paganism.²⁷

After 428 Cyril focused almost all his attention on Nestorianism, writing numerous letters and treatises, the largest of which was *Adversus Nestorii blasphemias*, composed during the spring of 430.²⁸ Political factors undoubtedly played some role in the controversy that erupted between Nestorius and Cyril. Henry Chadwick, however, has convincingly demonstrated that Cyril's concerns were primarily theological, and that he was genuinely troubled by the soteriological ramifications of Nestorius's chris-

24. For a listing of Cyril's early works see Robert L. Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind: A Study of Cyril of Alexandria's Exegesis and Theology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 5.

25. See Georges Jouassard, "L'activité littéraire de Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie jusqu'à 428," in *Mélanges E. Podechard* (Lyons: Facultés Catholiques, 1945), 159–74.

26. See Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria*, 21–22.

27. See *ibid.* as well as Georges Jouassard, "La date des écrits antiariens de saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie," *Revue Bénédictine* 87 (1977): 172–78; Wickham, ed., *Select Letters*, xvii–xviii n. 19.

28. Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria*, 130.

toology, specifically in terms of the Eucharist.²⁹ What began as an exchange of polemical letters between Cyril and Nestorius, regarding whether Mary could be called *Theotokos* ("God-bearer"), developed into a full-blown christological confrontation, culminating in the Council of Ephesus in 431. While Nestorius was formally condemned by the council, it took two more years after the council before formal reconciliation occurred between Alexandria and Antioch.³⁰ Cyril spent the remaining years of his life clarifying his teachings (particularly for those who disagreed with his reconciliation with Antioch) and composing small treatises on such topics as christology, the Nicene Creed, and anthropology.³¹ He died on June 27, 444, leaving behind a tremendous corpus of writings.

The Purpose and Structure of the Glaphyra

Cyril wrote two large commentaries on the Pentateuch. The first, to which he makes brief reference in the *Glaphyra*, is *De adoratione et cultu in spiritu et veritate*. Unlike Cyril's other exegetical works, including the *Glaphyra*, *De adoratione* is not a verse-by-verse commentary, but is written in a dialogical form and is arranged around broad themes.³² The *Glaphyra* is a much different work

29. Henry Chadwick, "Eucharist and Christology in the Nestorian Controversy," *The Journal of Theological Studies*, NS 2 (1951): 145–61. See also Wickham, ed., *Select Letters*, xix–xxviii; McGuckin, *Christological Controversy*, 21: "In the great conflict that was now to unfold, the issues cannot be reduced merely to the level of personality clashes, or even to the complex issue of the precedence of sees, or the involved political machinations of the imperial court ... for what was about to clash was no less than two great schools of ecclesiastical reflection, piety, and discourse."

30. For an in-depth account of the Nestorian crisis, see McGuckin, *Christological Controversy*, 20–125; Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria*, 31–58. See also Rodolph Yanney, "Life and Work of Saint Cyril of Alexandria," *Coptic Church Review* 19 (1998): 24–26.

31. Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria*, 56–58.

32. See Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind*, 69, for a list of themes in *De adoratione*. For more on the purpose and structure of *De adoratione*, see Mark W. Elliott, "What Cyril of Alexandria's *De Adoratione* is All About," *Studia Patristica* 50 (2011): 245–52, and Matthew R. Crawford, "The Preface and Subject Matter of Cyril of Alexandria's *De Adoratione*," *The Journal of Theological Studies*, NS 64.1 (2013): 154–67.

from *De adoratione*, as Cyril himself acknowledges in book 8 when commenting on how his treatment of Exodus differs from that which he had provided in *De adoratione*:

For, if God wills and grants the wisdom, we will now deal with the sections in Exodus which can be seen to have been omitted when we composed our moral exhortation [*De adoratione*]. It was then thought best to avoid lengthy discourse, as we wanted to show how we are to understand the manner of worship in spirit and in truth. For having delineated each of the sections that comprise the five books of Moses, and having first carefully considered the matter in them intended for our contemplation, we conveniently gathered together those things in some way necessary for moral guidance and things that were especially profitable, in what I would say was the most appropriate order for each matter. Yet those things by means of which the mystery of Christ seems to some degree to be depicted in advance, albeit in shadows relating to the law, we reserved for the work to be written later [the *Glaphyra*].³³

The primary focus of *De adoratione* was not specifically doctrinal, though he does not ignore doctrine in this work. Rather, as Cyril writes, his focus was on deriving moral guidance from the Pentateuch. The *Glaphyra* is different in that Cyril is focused specifically on drawing out “the mystery of Christ” hidden in the text.

Cyril’s exegetical method and style have been the subject of numerous studies, particularly in relation to his interpretation of the Hebrew scriptures.³⁴ My purpose here is simply to high-

33. PG 69: 385B–388A. All translations from the *Glaphyra* are by Nicholas Lunn. All references to the text will be to Migne’s *Patrologia Graeca*.

34. One of the best and most recent treatments of Cyril’s understanding of scripture is Matthew R. Crawford’s book, *Cyril of Alexandria’s Trinitarian Theology of Scripture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). Other treatments of Cyril’s exegesis of the Old Testament include Alexander Kerrigan, *St Cyril of Alexandria: Interpreter of the Old Testament* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1952); Robert Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind*; Bertrand de Margerie, “L’exégèse christologique de saint Cyrille d’Alexandrie,” *Nouvelle Revue de Théologie* 102 (1980): 400–435; Robert L. Wilken, “St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Mystery of Christ in the Bible,” *Pro Ecclesia* 4 (1995): 454–78; John J. O’Keefe, “Christianizing Malachi: Fifth-Century Insights from Cyril of Alexandria,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 50.2 (1996): 136–58; John A. McGuckin, “Moses and the Mystery of Christ in Cyril of Alexandria’s Exegesis, Part I,” *Coptic Church Review* 21.1 (2000): 24–32; idem, “Moses and the Mystery of Christ in Cyril of Alexandria’s Exegesis, Part II,” *Coptic Church Review* 21.2 (2000): 98–114; J. David Cassel, “Key principles in Cyril of Alexandria’s exegesis,” *Studia Patristica* 37

light key facets of how Cyril goes about interpreting the Pentateuch in the *Glaphyra*. As is the case in most of his Old Testament commentaries, Cyril's focus in the *Glaphyra* is on what he refers to as the spiritual meaning of the text, which he contrasts with the literal meaning of the text. This does not mean, as we shall see, that Cyril neglects the literal sense of the text as unimportant. Rather, Cyril is convinced that, above and beyond the literal sense of scripture is a higher sense, a spiritual sense. Matthew Crawford points out that "Cyril displays a remarkable consistency in describing the higher sense of Scripture as 'spiritual,'" and the word he uses most frequently to denote the spiritual sense is *θεωρία*, sometimes pairing it with an adjective, such as in the phrase *θεωρία πνευματική*.³⁵ We see Cyril using such terminology in the *Glaphyra* with regularity when describing the spiritual sense.³⁶ For example, referring to what he hopes to accomplish in his exploration of the story of Noah, Cyril writes: "Come then, and let us describe, as we are able, each detail concerning him, refining the earthiness of the literal sense and skillfully transforming the things that occurred visibly into matter for spiritual contemplation [*θεωρίαν τὴν πνευματικὴν*]." ³⁷ For Cyril, this spiritual sense always points to the mystery of Christ.³⁸ Again, with

(2001): 413–20; Robert L. Wilken, "Cyril of Alexandria as Interpreter of the Old Testament," in *The Theology of St Cyril of Alexandria*, ed. Weinandy and Keating, 1–21; Matthew R. Crawford, "Scripture as 'One Book': Origen, Jerome, and Cyril of Alexandria on Isaiah 29:11," *The Journal of Theological Studies*, NS 64.1 (2013): 137–53. The late Robert C. Hill's introductions to his translations of Cyril's *Commentary on the Twelve Prophets* and his *Commentary on Isaiah* are also helpful; references are in nn. 7–8, above. See especially "Introduction," in *St. Cyril of Alexandria: Commentary on the Twelve Prophets, Volume 1*, 2–22, and "Introduction," in *Cyril of Alexandria: Commentary on Isaiah, Volume I: Chapters 1–14*, 1–14. The most thorough survey of biblical exegesis during the patristic period as a whole is Frances M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

35. Crawford, *Cyril of Alexandria's Trinitarian Theology of Scripture*, 217. This point is also made by Kerrigan, *St Cyril of Alexandria: Interpreter*, 112–15, and by de Margerie, "L'exégèse christologique," 401.

36. For example, see PG 69: 149B; PG 69: 181B; PG 69: 293B; PG 69: 664D. 37. PG 69: 49C.

38. de Margerie, "L'exégèse christologique," 401; Crawford, *Cyril of Alexandria's Trinitarian Theology of Scripture*, 220–21; O'Keefe, "Christianizing Malachi," 140–41; Robert L. Wilken, "St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Mystery of Christ in the

reference to the story of Noah, Cyril writes: "So let us now go over the things that have been said to bring out the hidden, inner, spiritual meaning [θεωρίαν], and let us trace out the mystery of Christ and present Noah himself and the ingenious and mysterious arrangement relating to the ark as a picture of the salvation that comes through Christ."³⁹

Therefore, when Cyril refers to "the extraordinary beauty of the spiritual contemplation (θεωρίας),"⁴⁰ he means the beauty of the text when interpreted christologically. According to Cyril, this deeper christological meaning of the text is hidden within the literal sense of the texts. "This can be likened," he writes, "to the most fragrant flowers in the meadows, which are wrapped around with ordinary leaves on the outside. If one cuts them open, he will find and lay bare what is good and profitable."⁴¹ Christ is to be found on almost every page of the law. He is the pearl hidden in the text,⁴² although to the one who looks carefully, Christ is found everywhere: "It is the intent of inspired Scripture to indicate to us the mystery of Christ through innumerable objects. Someone might compare it to a magnificent and illustrious city which does not have just one image of its king, but very many, set up everywhere and visible to all."⁴³

As can be seen, the spiritual sense is for Cyril the primary and most important sense for understanding the true meaning of the scriptures. Cyril, however, does not disregard the literal meaning of the text in the *Glaphyra*, but devotes extensive attention to it, acknowledging that not everything in the scriptures can or should be interpreted spiritually. "One should realize," Cyril writes in book 4, "that some things that happened at the literal level are just as they are in themselves."⁴⁴ And even for those passages in the scriptures that do lend themselves to a spiritual interpretation, Cyril is still at pains to provide a careful explanation

Bible," 459; McGuckin, "Moses and 'The Mystery of Christ' in Cyril of Alexandria's Exegesis, Part 1," 25.

39. PG 69: 60A. See also PG 69: 149B.

40. PG 69: 293B.

41. PG 69: 140A.

42. PG 69: 13A.

43. PG 69: 308C.

44. PG 69: 192B. See also O'Keefe, "Christianizing Malachi," 138–39.

of the literal meaning of the text before proceeding to a spiritual exegesis. In his *Commentary on Isaiah*, Cyril explains why it is that he devotes such attention to the literal meaning. Acknowledging the preeminence of the spiritual over the literal, Cyril nevertheless argues that a true understanding of the spiritual sense can occur only through careful examination of the literal meaning first: “I say that those who wish to make clear the subtle and hidden breath of spiritual insights must hasten to consider thoroughly, with the eye of the mind, especially, on the one hand, the exact literal meaning [τῆς ἱστορίας τὸ ἀκριβές] and, on the other hand, the interpretation resulting from spiritual contemplation [τῆς πνευματικῆς θεωρίας].”⁴⁵ Cyril makes a similar comment at the beginning of the *Glaphyra* while explaining his methodology: “Now we shall first present the literal events in a helpful way, making them suitably clear. Then, refashioning the narrative by bringing it out of type and shadow, we shall explain it with reference to the mystery of Christ, having him as the goal, since it is true that Christ is the end of the law and the prophets.”⁴⁶ In order to comprehend the deeper meaning of the text, in order to be able to draw out the christological nuances present in the scripture, it is necessary to have a thorough understanding of the literal level itself.⁴⁷ Thus, one will find in the *Glaphyra* that Cyril always follows the same method when going through the text. He first provides an explanation of the literal meaning of the passage under question, and only after doing so does he delve into the spiritual meaning of the text.

45. PG 70: 9A. This is a slight modification of the translation provided in O’Keefe, “Christianizing Malachi,” 139.

46. PG 69: 16A.

47. Drawing on Frances Young’s work, John J. O’Keefe argues that the exegetical methods of the ancient grammatical schools were an influence on Cyril’s approach to exegeting scriptures, as they were an influence on the Antiochene approach. The grammatical method involved a number of steps—checking the accuracy of the text as well as examining difficult names and historical details—before delving more deeply into the meaning of the text. See O’Keefe, “Christianizing Malachi,” 138–39, and Frances Young, “The Rhetorical Schools and their Influence on Patristic Exegesis,” in *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick*, ed. Rowan Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 182–99.

The Bishop as Exegete and Enlightener

Divine assistance, however, is necessary if one is to comprehend this spiritual meaning. This point Cyril makes in the *Glaphyra* while commenting on Exodus 34.33–34, which refers to the veil that Moses put on in the presence of the Israelites to obscure the radiance of his face but that he removed when entering the presence of God. Cyril, reading the text spiritually, interprets this event as follows:

For the law contains a shadow, the earthiness of the letter, and the not very great brightness of the literal sense. When, however, he entered into the presence of God, it says that Moses removed the veil. This same thing we find also to be true with respect to our own selves. For when we have been brought, as it were, into the presence of God the Father, being led there by Christ, we will see the glory of Moses without any obscuring shadows, as we will understand the law spiritually, for “we are being transformed from one degree of glory to another,” as it is written.⁴⁸

To understand the law spiritually, we need to be transformed spiritually, brought into relationship with God the Father through Christ himself. And for this to occur, we must be transformed by the Holy Spirit, given to Christians through Christ. In his recent book on Cyril’s exegesis, Matthew Crawford demonstrates that Cyril understands the divine life to be communicated in and through the scriptures. That is to say, for Cyril exegesis is inseparable from transformative contemplation of the Son revealed in the scriptures: “[T]he practice of exegesis results in growth in virtue and understanding of the Christological mystery. In other words, exegesis takes place in the Spirit, proceeds through contemplation of the Son, and leads ultimately to the Father.”⁴⁹ The goal of exegesis is the Spirit-led vision of Christ in the scripture, through which one ultimately beholds the Father.⁵⁰ Crawford argues that Cyril’s theology of scriptural exegesis has a close correlation to his sacramental theology in that, just as believers are brought into transforma-

48. PG 69: 537B. See n. 33 above. Also *Glaphyra*, vol. 2, trans. Lunn (forthcoming).

49. Crawford, *Cyril of Alexandria’s Trinitarian Theology of Scripture*, 183–84.

50. *Ibid.*, 229.

tive immediacy with the Spirit and the Son through baptism and the Eucharist, so the scriptures bring us to an analogous participation in the divine life. Exegesis can thus bring one to a “Spirit-enabled contemplation of the Son in scripture, by which believers are led onwards to a vision of the Father.”⁵¹

According to Cyril, the ability to contemplate the Son in the scriptures, to comprehend the mystery of Christ, is given to all who possess the Spirit. But it is a gift particularly given to those who guide the church, the bishops. As successors to the apostles, bishops are elucidators of the scriptures, drawing out the mystery of Christ in the scriptures for those under their care. This point Cyril makes in the *Glaphyra* both with reference to the apostles themselves and to bishops as their successors. In a number of places in the *Glaphyra*, Cyril refers to the disciples’ reception of the Holy Spirit. Their reception of the Holy Spirit is significant both because they became the first fruits of a renewed and transformed humanity through the Holy Spirit and because, through the Spirit, they became enlightened so as to interpret the scriptures christologically. Cyril describes this enlightenment as follows:

For when Christ was raised to life from the dead, having trampled down death and plundered Hades, “saying to those in bonds, ‘Come out,’ and to those in darkness, ‘Show yourselves,’” [Is 49.9] and then beautifying human nature by the Holy Spirit as the firstfruits of the human race and of those being restored to holiness, he breathed upon the apostles and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit” [Jn 20.22]. Then the eyes of our minds were opened, and then we were enlightened, and we came to understand the law that had remained obscure since ancient times, that which had been unknown to any of those of old. We were also then gathered together from the corners of the earth to the place he chose, which is the church, and for us who have come to that place, the elected sacred instructors and teachers interpret the law with its types and shadows.⁵²

Here we see Cyril describe the disciples as enlighteners, capable through the Holy Spirit of reading the law christologically. Notably, Cyril also includes the bishops among those whose eyes were opened and who are now teachers of mysteries. Cyril understands that he and his fellow bishops participate in the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit in an analogous manner as

51. Ibid., 4.

52. PG 69: 676C–D.

did the disciples, and that his primary task as a bishop is to teach the flock to understand clearly the christological meaning of the law, a meaning “expressed in types and shadows.”⁵³

He expresses similar ideas elsewhere in the *Glaphyra*. In book 7, commenting on Genesis 49.20, which he reads as “Asher’s bread is rich, and he will provide food for rulers,” Cyril discusses the role of bishops as teachers. He uses the reference to bread in this verse to talk about the “life-giving bread” that is particularly given to bishops who teach their flock. Christ feeds the leaders of his flock on earth with food of a spiritual nature, namely, “the revelation of divine mysteries and the knowledge of all virtue.”⁵⁴ The reason why these leaders are fed in this way is in order that they themselves might “feed those people under their authority with teachings that lead to life.”⁵⁵ These teachings, as Cyril has made clear, are christological in nature, so his reference here is to the role the bishops play in opening up the christological import of the scriptures to their flock. Indeed, Cyril directly connects the work of the bishops to that done by the Spirit-filled apostles: “We shall find the teachers of the churches engaged in this task [the task of teaching], and before them the holy apostles especially did so.”⁵⁶ And both the apostles and the bishops are able to do this through the “provisions granted through the Spirit.”⁵⁷

One other passage from the *Glaphyra* is worth noting as a way of demonstrating the emphasis Cyril places on the bishops as interpreters of the scriptures. He uses the story of Jacob as a shepherd caring for Laban’s flocks as a springboard for expounding on the disciples and later on the bishops as shepherds of those belonging to the church, focusing particularly on the importance of interpreting the scriptures christologically. He points first to the disciples, who through the Holy Spirit became “spiritual shepherds, skilled in divine instruction.”⁵⁸ This divine instruction revolved around the scriptures, as Cyril makes clear when referring to those whom the disciples appointed as shepherds in their stead:

53. Ibid.

54. PG 69: 369A.

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid.

57. PG 69: 369B.

58. PG 69: 197A.

So passing through each land and town, they appointed countless other shepherds to lead the people and to care for the spiritual sheep, to feed them, as it were, in good pasture, in a fertile place, and to bring them to the most wonderful grass, namely, the inspired Scripture. For the word of God is life-giving food for the soul.⁵⁹

As the section proceeds, Cyril focuses more attention on the central role scriptural interpretation plays in a bishop's leadership. Pointing to the text from Genesis, Cyril notes that a very heavy stone was placed over a well and only Jacob was able to lift it to allow for others to drink from the waters. Similarly, the Jewish scriptures are covered with a heavy stone that leads most to be unable to drink from the life-giving water embedded in the text. This is why it is so important that the bishops lift this stone: "So much labor and sweat are necessary on the part of those tending the spiritual flocks in order to take the word out from its obscurity, to draw it from the depths, as it were, and bring it up into the open, and so to set it forth clearly for the life-giving benefit of their listeners."⁶⁰

Cyril's emphasis in the *Glaphyra* and elsewhere on the absolute importance of comprehending the christological import of the Hebrew scriptures, and particularly on the role bishops play in aiding their flocks to see and understand the deeper meaning of the scriptures,⁶¹ goes some way to explaining why Cyril devoted himself so thoroughly to the task of writing this commentary on the Pentateuch, and explains further why he devoted so much of his literary output to scriptural interpretation. Cyril is convinced that a tremendous amount rides on how the Hebrew scriptures are interpreted, arguing that the disciples were themselves given the Holy Spirit in John 20 specifically so that they could attain to an understanding of the christological meaning of those scriptures. And that which the disciples were called to do has passed to the bishops themselves, whose primary job, according to Cyril,

59. PG 69: 197B.

60. PG 69: 200A–B.

61. For more on the emphasis Cyril placed on the role of bishops in the proper interpretation of scripture see Crawford, *Cyril of Alexandria's Trinitarian Theology of Scripture*, 96–103, 160–73, 197–98; Bertrand de Margerie, "L'exégèse christologique de saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie," 403–5; Gregory K. Hillis, "The Holy Spirit and Episcopal Teaching Authority according to Cyril of Alexandria," *Theoforum* 40.3 (2009): 187–208.

is to draw out the christological nuances of those scriptures, nuances that are denied by the Jews and not immediately seen by the faithful. It is indeed likely that Cyril wrote this commentary, as well as his other commentaries on scripture, primarily to educate and train clergy in the proper interpretation of scripture.⁶²

*The Glaphyra and Jewish-Christian
Relations in Alexandria*

In addition to providing a means by which to understand Cyril's theology of scriptural interpretation as well as a means to examine Cyril's theology beyond the narrow confines of the Nestorian controversy, the *Glaphyra* gives us a glimpse into the tumultuous relationship between Jews and Christians in Alexandria in the fifth century. As already noted, Cyril's focus in the *Glaphyra* is on elucidating the christological meaning of the scriptures, and as shall be seen, Cyril's focus on discovering Christ in the Pentateuch leads him to expound on christology, pneumatology, and soteriology in ways that should be of interest to those wanting to know more about the development of Cyril's theology beyond the narrow confines of his specifically doctrinal works. His emphasis, however, on discovering Christ in the text also comes with pronounced denunciation of Jews, who, to Cyril's mind, obstinately refuse to recognize Christ in their own scriptures. Peppered throughout the *Glaphyra*, therefore, are screeds against the Jews and their (alleged) ignorance. For just as Cyril is able to locate Christ in the letter of the law, so he is able also to find evidence for what he perceives to be the ultimate downfall of the Jews for their rejection of Christ.

An unfortunately typical example of this can be found in Cyril's interpretation of Joseph's treatment at the hands of his brothers. Consistent with his methodology, Cyril first provides for the reader an account of the literal meaning of the text, but delves more deeply into it to draw out the spiritual meaning. According to Cyril, therefore, the tale of Joseph points to the treat-

62. See J. David Cassel, "Cyril of Alexandria as Educator," in *In Dominico Eloquentio—In Lordly Eloquence: Essays on Patristic Exegesis in Honor of Robert Louis Wilken*, ed. Paul M. Blowers, Angela Russell Christman, David G. Hunter, and Robin Darling Young (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 348–68.

ment Jesus himself would receive at the hands of the Jews. Just as Joseph's brothers took offense to notions that Joseph would one day rule over them, the "Jews too were incited and not a little vexed when they learned that Emmanuel would be superior to the holy patriarchs themselves."⁶³ Therefore, Cyril writes that the Jews showed "cruel and unrestrained envy" of Christ and so became "intolerable and murderous."⁶⁴ Consequently, "those wretched men killed [Christ] and, as it were, put him into a pit—the deep, dark pit of death, which is Hades."⁶⁵

These words are not easy to read, reflecting as they do an often-expressed animosity towards Jews in the *Glaphyra*. Cyril accuses the Jews of killing Christ and argues that they are ignorant,⁶⁶ stupid,⁶⁷ and spiritually lame,⁶⁸ utterly incapable of reading and understanding their own scriptures.⁶⁹ Whatever may be the benefits of reading Cyril's christological interpretations of the Pentateuch for understanding his theology and biblical hermeneutics, we also have to reckon with the pervasive anti-Jewish rhetoric found throughout the pages of the *Glaphyra*. In his introduction to the English translation of Cyril's *Festal Letters*, John O'Keefe endeavors to explain the anti-Jewish venom present in those letters, arguing that this rhetoric needs to be read in the context of the cultural and theological battles being waged in fifth-century Alexandria between Christians and Jews. For Christians, this rhetoric emerged out of the fundamental question as to why vibrant Jewish communities continue to exist after the coming of the Messiah.⁷⁰ Given that Christians had appropriated the Jewish scriptures for themselves, they found themselves having to make sense of these texts given the continued presence of Jewish communities that interpreted those

63. PG 69: 304A.

64. PG 69: 304B.

65. PG 69: 305B.

66. PG 69: 456A–D.

67. PG 69: 80A.

68. PG 69: 272B–D.

69. PG 69: 41B–D; 533B–C.

70. John J. O'Keefe, "Introduction," in *St. Cyril of Alexandria: Festal Letters 1–12*, trans. Philip R. Amidon (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2009), 20.

texts very differently.⁷¹ In Alexandria this battle was particularly intense, partly because it was only in the fifth century that Christians began outnumbering Jews in the general population.⁷²

The *Glaphyra* was written during the tumultuous years of Cyril's early episcopacy, which witnessed to a prominent conflict between Cyril and the Alexandrian Jewish community, leading to the purported expulsion of Jews from Alexandria. The details of this conflict, recounted by the historian Socrates in his *Historia ecclesiastica*, need not occupy us here.⁷³ It suffices to say that, after a particularly violent event—apparently a group of Jews tricked Christians into believing that their church was on fire and then attacked them when they came out of their homes—Socrates writes that Cyril gathered a large group of Christians to drive Jews from their synagogues and homes, plundering them of their possessions. There are reasons to think that Socrates exaggerated the scope of the Jewish expulsion from Alexandria. It is unlikely, even impossible, that Cyril would have been able to expel most of the Jewish population from Alexandria. Not only would this have been logistically difficult to accomplish, but an expulsion of the Jewish population would have had devastating economic ramifications on Alexandria. Nevertheless, there is no reason to doubt the basic outline of Socrates's story, which tells us that Cyril had direct contact with the Jewish population and that clashes, even violent clashes, marked the relationship between the Christian and Jewish communities of Alexandria.

If we take this tumultuous relationship into account, Cyril's anti-Jewish rhetoric in the *Glaphyra* takes on a somewhat different light. Given that Jews and Christians were in open conflict in Alexandria, it is unsurprising, albeit regretful, that Cyril's commentary on the Pentateuch would contain venom. Whatever may be the cultural reasons for Jewish-Christian conflict, the theological reasons revolved principally around the person of Jesus Christ and, relatedly, around how to interpret the Jews' own scriptures. From Cyril's perspective, as we will see, Christ is

71. Ibid., 21

72. Ibid., 21–22.

73. See Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind*, 54–58, for a detailed account and analysis of this conflict.

present on each page of the Hebrew scriptures, available to be seen by any who partake of the Holy Spirit bestowed by Christ himself. That the Jews fail to see Christ in their very own scriptures is an endless source of bafflement and frustration to Cyril, which he continually expresses in his commentary on those scriptures. That the Jews fail to see what is, to him, so clear indicates for Cyril a tremendous failure on the part of the Jews. And given the constant fighting between Christians and Jews in Alexandria, Cyril wastes no opportunities in his commentary to assert Christian superiority over Jews in the interpretation of the Jewish community's very own scriptures.

This was a rhetorically effective move for Cyril to make in the context of Jewish-Christian animosity. But this rhetorical advantage is gained by using language that, read through the prism of centuries of Christian anti-Semitism culminating in the Holocaust, is troubling. The ferocity of his venom demonstrates an animosity toward Jews and Judaism that is without excuse regardless of the context. At the same time, I would be remiss were I not also to direct attention to the many references Cyril makes in the *Glaphyra* to the ultimate salvation of the Jews. In due course, Cyril writes, the Jews "will repent and be accepted. They will obtain mercy from the Father above, as they acknowledge the Savior and Redeemer of all. This too the sacred Scripture reveals."⁷⁴ While he holds nothing back in his anti-Jewish vitriol, Cyril still looks forward to the ultimate salvation of those whom he attacks, a salvation promised in scripture. This does not excuse his anti-Jewish rhetoric, but it does contextualize that rhetoric more fully. Regardless of his animosity toward the Jews in Alexandria and elsewhere, Cyril acknowledges, without reluctance and on the basis of scripture, that God's plan of salvation ultimately includes those with whom God originally made a covenant.

Cyril's anti-Jewish rhetoric suggests that the *Glaphyra* emerged, at least in part, in response to Jewish-Christian conflict in Alexandria. That said, Cyril's purpose for the *Glaphyra* cannot and

74. PG 69: 136A. See also 261A–C and 324D–325C. For more on this facet of Cyril's theology, see Daniel Keating, "Supersessionism in Cyril of Alexandria," *Studia Patristica* 68 (2013): 122–23.

should not be limited solely to his anti-Jewish agenda. Central to Cyril's task as exegete is to appropriate the Pentateuch for the church, that is, to assert that the Hebrew scriptures are, first and foremost, *Christian* scriptures to be interpreted and understood christologically, and his anti-Jewish rhetoric is born in part out of this purpose. At the same time, we should not forget that Cyril took his role as elucidator of scriptural mysteries seriously. Cyril's primary focus is thus on breaking open the nuances of the spiritual sense of scripture for his flock so that they might contemplate the Son fully in the text. Cyril's purpose in the *Glaphyra* is ultimately pedagogical and pastoral.

Theological Themes in the Glaphyra

Cyril's focus on the specifically Christian content of the Pentateuch necessarily leads him to develop and expound upon theological ideas and themes. While many of these are more thoroughly developed in later writings, their presence in the *Glaphyra* demonstrates that the theological concerns he had later in his career were already in his mind at an early date. I want to focus some attention on a few of these ideas and themes as a means not only of introducing the reader to Cyril's early theology, but also of demonstrating that Cyril took with great seriousness his task of enlightening his flock theologically. I will first examine Cyril's christology in the *Glaphyra*, focusing particularly on his account of Christ as the Second Adam, as well as his treatment of the relationship between the human and the divine in Christ. I will then devote some space to his pneumatology, which is a neglected facet of Cyril's thought and one that merits more thorough attention. Again, although his pneumatology is more thoroughly developed in later works, particularly in his *Dialogues on the Trinity* and *Commentary on John*, already in the *Glaphyra* the Spirit figures prominently. Finally, and related to both his christology and pneumatology, I will examine Cyril's soteriology as articulated throughout the *Glaphyra*, paying particular attention to his frequent references to 2 Peter 1.4 and his emphasis on salvation as divine filiation through the Spirit, who conforms us to the likeness of the Son.

Jesus Christ as the Second Adam

In his *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind*, as well as in numerous articles, Robert Wilken demonstrated that Cyril frequently appeals to the Pauline notion of Christ as the Second Adam in his interpretation of both the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament. For example, when faced with the complicated task of interpreting Jesus Christ's baptismal reception of the Holy Spirit in a manner that preserved christological orthodoxy—that is, by interpreting it so as to emphasize that Christ received the Holy Spirit without actually needing the Spirit, given his divine unity with the Third Person—Cyril argues in his *Commentary on John* and elsewhere that Christ received the Spirit as the Second Adam. The first Adam received the Spirit when God breathed his Spirit upon him (Genesis 2.7).⁷⁵ Adam, however, lost it through sin, and because of this, the Son of God became human in order to be for us the Second Adam who could receive the Spirit as the sinless one and therefore preserve the Spirit's indwelling in humanity for our sake.⁷⁶

We see Cyril similarly appeal to Christ as the Second Adam in his interpretation of Christ's conception through the Holy Spirit. Faced with the question of why Jesus was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, Cyril chooses to interpret this event soteriologically, arguing that he was conceived through the Spirit not for his own sake but for ours. As he writes in *On the Unity of Christ*, a work written near the end of his life, Christ was conceived by the power of the Spirit in order that we too shall be-

75. For an account of the anthropological and pneumatological weight Cyril rests on Genesis 2.7, see Marie-Odile Boulnois, "Le soufflé et l'Esprit: Exégèses patristiques de l'insufflation originelle de Gn 2, 7 en lien avec celle de Jn 20, 20," in *RA* 24 (1989): 3–37.

76. Cyril offers this interpretation of Christ's baptismal reception of the Spirit in numerous places, but most prominently in his exegesis of John 1.32–33 in his *Commentary on John*. For an English translation of this passage of exegesis, see *Cyril of Alexandria: Commentary on John, Volume 1*, trans. Maxwell, 77–85. For more on Cyril's interpretation of Christ's baptism, see Daniel A. Keating, "The Baptism of Jesus in Cyril of Alexandria: The Re-Creation of the Human Race," *Pro Ecclesia* 8 (1999): 201–22; Robert L. Wilken, "The Interpretation of the Baptism of Jesus in the Later Fathers," *Studia Patristica* 11 (1967): 268–77; idem, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind*, 127–42.

come born of the Spirit because in him [Christ] human nature attained this state first.⁷⁷

The Second Adam typology thus provides for Cyril a way in which he could interpret potentially problematic New Testament texts in a christologically orthodox manner. But the typology does more than that for Cyril. It is at the heart of the way in which he characterizes the meaning and purpose of the Incarnation throughout his entire corpus, and is central to his soteriology. In the *Glaphyra* we see that the typology of Christ as the Second Adam was a prominent theme for Cyril early in his writing career. Perhaps predictably, this typology emerges in the very first book of the *Glaphyra* with reference to the first Adam and the fall of humanity in a subsection entitled "Concerning Adam." Cyril sets the tone of his treatment of Adam by immediately referring to Ephesians 1.9–10, focusing particularly on God's promise "to gather up all things in [Christ], things in heaven and things on earth." Cyril understands this verse to refer to the "recapitulation" of all things, by which he means the restoration of all things to what they were at the beginning. This for Cyril is a central component of his soteriology, characterizing human salvation primarily in terms of a retrieval of that which Adam possessed when he was created.⁷⁸ For Cyril, the Son of God became incarnate in order that humanity might regain its original created state. "For in Christ," he writes, "we have been transformed and have become a new creation."⁷⁹

Given that human salvation is for Cyril a return to our original state of being, he proceeds to "examine the old state of affairs."⁸⁰ Cyril points specifically to Genesis 2.7 as being central to

77. See *Cyril of Alexandria: On the Unity of Christ*, trans. John A. McGuckin (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2000), 62–63. For more on Cyril's interpretation of the Spirit's role in Christ's conception, see Gregory K. Hillis, "New Birth through the Second Adam: The Holy Spirit and the Miraculous Conception in Cyril of Alexandria," *Studia Patristica* 48 (2010): 47–51.

78. See Robert L. Wilken, "Exegesis and the History of Theology: Reflections on the Adam-Christ Typology in Cyril of Alexandria," *Church History* 35 (1966): 142–43, and (1971): 93–142. See also Walter J. Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man according to Cyril of Alexandria* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1957), 160–65.

79. PG 69: 16D.

80. PG 69: 17A.

human creation, interpreting the “breath of life” to be the Holy Spirit.⁸¹ We were created to partake of the Holy Spirit, to have unity with God through the Spirit. As such, humanity “was the image of the highest glory.”⁸² But humanity, endowed with free will, fell into sin, and Cyril describes the consequences of this fall primarily in terms of death and mortality. Cyril, however, emphasizes that humanity’s fall was not absolute, for God intended to renew humanity:

Yet the living creature was not consigned to complete destruction, but rather to renewal and, if we might say it thus, to a refashioning in the same way that a vessel which has been smashed is later made whole. That in the meantime the living creature would in fact experience corruption, the Maker was not unaware, but he well knew that together with this there would be deliverance from those things that were improper and the removal of corruption, as well as the return to a better state and the restoration of those good things that were there in the beginning.⁸³

Here Cyril posits that God intended to return humanity to its original state, but, more than that, to bring humanity to an even better state than it had at its beginning.

This God did through Christ, and to describe how Christ accomplished this, Cyril appeals to Christ as the Second Adam. He writes:

So, as the image of the first man taken from the ground was imprinted upon us, which had to suffer death and be ensnared in the cords of corruption, thus also in the case of our second beginning after that first one, that is to say, Christ, in whose likeness we are made through the Spirit, incorruptible nature is impressed upon us.⁸⁴

Thus, Cyril writes one paragraph later, Christ has “become a second Adam for us.”⁸⁵ Just as we experienced death in and through the first Adam, so we attain to incorruptibility in and through the Second Adam, who becomes for humankind a new beginning. In this way, the story of humanity’s creation in Genesis provides for us a representation of the mystery of Christ: “For Adam was the beginning of the race, with respect to death,

81. PG 69: 20B–C.

82. PG 69: 20C.

83. PG 69: 24D–25A.

84. PG 69: 28D.

85. PG 69: 29B.

the curse, and condemnation. But Christ was the complete reverse, bringing life, blessing, and justification.”⁸⁶ By using Second Adam typology, Cyril effectively “Christianizes” the story of human creation, using the Genesis account to elaborate on the salvation made possible through Christ.

Another example suffices to demonstrate the prevalence of Second Adam typology in the *Glaphyra*. In book 3, he interprets the blessing Isaac gave to Jacob by using the typology of Christ as the Second Adam, arguing that the blessing bestowed upon Jacob was not fulfilled in Jacob but was wholly fulfilled in Christ as the Second Adam: “[Christ] is also considered to be a second Adam, and he was born as a second root of humanity. For what is in Christ is a new creation, and we are renewed in him for sanctification, incorruption, and life.”⁸⁷ To illustrate this point, Cyril hearkens to Isaac’s comment that Jacob smells like a “full-grown field,” and he proceeds to interpret this with reference to Christ:

The words of the blessing, I believe, denote the spiritual aroma in Christ, like that of a field or a meadow blooming abundantly, spreading a beautiful and pleasant fragrance from its spring flowers. So Christ described himself to us in the Song of Songs, saying, “I am a flower of the plain, a lily of the valleys.” [Song 2.1] He was, indeed, a lily and a rose sprung up from the earth, for the sake of humankind. Since he knew no sin, he was the most Godlike of those inhabiting the whole world, bringing forth a pleasing aroma through the perfection of his deeds. Therefore, it likens Christ to a field blessed by God, and rightly so, as he is the fragrance of the knowledge of God the Father.⁸⁸

Using the typology of Christ as the Second Adam, Cyril takes the original text about Isaac’s blessing of Jacob, and transforms it to become an explicitly Christian text with an explicitly Christian interpretation. The blessing was not actually about Jacob; its actual meaning revolves around Jesus Christ and the salvation made possible through him.

Emphasis on Christ as the Second Adam is prevalent in the *Glaphyra*. Apart, however, from the numerous references to Christ as the Second Adam, Cyril does not tend to delve into christology itself. Therefore, we do not find in the *Glaphyra* much in the way

86. PG 69: 29D.

87. PG 69: 172B.

88. PG 69: 172B–C.

of detailed christological formulation, such as what we find in his specifically Trinitarian works, all of which have Arian christology as a target, or what we find in his later anti-Nestorian writings. In one place Cyril does make comments that prefigure his christological insights during the Nestorian controversy. They occur in the context of Cyril's interpretation of the cutting of the animals into two to solidify God's covenant with Abraham (Genesis 15.7–17). After providing a literal interpretation, Cyril proceeds to interpret this event spiritually, in a way that, as we have seen, revolves around the mystery of Christ. Cyril argues that the animals represent Christ, and he uses the opportunity to elaborate on the divine and human natures of Christ. The bull, "owing to its great strength and invincibility in a fight," represents Christ's divine nature.⁸⁹ The heifer represents his human nature. At this point, Cyril does not comment on the union of these natures. This he does when referring specifically to the separation of the animals. Cyril asks his readers to remember that, although all the animals were cut into pieces, the two birds were not. This has significance when interpreted christologically, according to Cyril:

The Only-Begotten Word of God became flesh, as if he were divided in two, and the matter we have to consider concerning him extends into two parts. For on the one hand we perceive his divine and ineffable generation from the Father, while on the other we speak also of the mystery of his Incarnation. This is the profundity of the divine economy—we both make separate and take as one, thereby imparting knowledge to those who do not understand this mystery. Although our consideration of him has become twofold, however, he himself is wholly one, not capable of being divided into two following his union with flesh. Nor can he be separated into two sons, for Christ is one and undivided.⁹⁰

As he will do against Nestorius, Cyril emphasizes the absolute unity of the divine and human after the Incarnation. He does not, however, elaborate on this point, likely for two reasons. First, christological issues were, at least to Cyril's mind, relatively uncontroversial at the time he was writing the *Glaphyra*. That he makes a brief comment against the notion of "two Christs" indicates that he thought there were some making such a claim. He does not, however, identify who these people are, and the fact that he devotes so little attention to it indicates that he under-

89. PG 69: 128B.

90. PG 69: 129B–C.

stood the threat posed by such people to be minimal. Second, Cyril's focus in the *Glaphyra* is on enunciating the "mystery of Christ," and for him this means focusing on the salvation made possible in and through Christ. What this means for Cyril is that he devotes far less attention to issues of doctrine than he does to the particularities of human salvation. Of course, in Cyril's specifically doctrinal treatises and his anti-Nestorian writings, soteriology is never off his radar. Trinitarian and christological doctrine is, for Cyril, inherently soteriological insofar as distorted conceptions of the Triune God and of Christ threaten what he perceives to be the orthodox Christian understanding of human salvation. The converse is also true. In the *Glaphyra*, although the focus is soteriological, Cyril will devote some space to doctrine. But far less attention is given to doctrinal concerns in the *Glaphyra* than we find in his later works.

The Holy Spirit

One of the gifts of this soteriological focus is that Cyril devotes an extended amount of attention to the person and work of the Holy Spirit. For those familiar with Cyril's corpus, this might not come as much of a surprise. Recent work has brought attention to Cyril's pneumatology, particularly as articulated in his doctrinal works.⁹¹ This research demonstrates that, although he is considered by many to be primarily a theologian of christology, Cyril had a vibrant and nuanced pneumatology that was pivotal to his thought as a whole.

The *Glaphyra* demonstrates that Cyril was focused on the person and work of the Holy Spirit from very early in his writing

91. See, for example, Crawford, *Cyril of Alexandria's Trinitarian Theology of Scripture*; Daniel A. Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life in Cyril of Alexandria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Brian E. Daley, "The Fullness of the Saving God: Cyril of Alexandria on the Holy Spirit," in *The Theology of St Cyril of Alexandria*, ed. Weinandy and Keating, 113–48; Gregory K. Hillis, "Pneumatology and Soteriology according to Gregory of Nazianzus and Cyril of Alexandria," *Studia Patristica* 67 (2013): 187–97. Some recent work has been done on Cyril's pneumatology in his exegetical work; see David Kneip, "The Holy Spirit in Cyril of Alexandria's Commentary on Isaiah," in *The Old Testament as Authoritative Scripture in the Early Churches of the East*, ed. Vahan S. Hovhannessian (New York: Peter Lang, 2010), 43–50.

career. In the *Glaphyra* Cyril does not—as he will in the *Thesaurus*, *Dialogues on the Trinity*, and the *Commentary on John*—provide a defense of the Spirit’s divinity, nor does he delve into the intertrinitarian relationships of the Spirit with the Father and the Son. He devotes significant attention, however, to two issues, both of which revolve in large part around the Holy Spirit. First, Cyril is at pains throughout the text to demonstrate the superiority of the Gospel over the Mosaic Law, and so the superiority of Christianity over Judaism. The Holy Spirit is central to Cyril’s argument on this point. Second, and less polemically, Cyril’s focus in the *Glaphyra* on the mystery of Christ and so on salvation through Christ leads him to elaborate on the Spirit’s role in human salvation. I will address the former first.

Throughout the text, Cyril emphasizes that the Mosaic Law has been superseded by the salvation made possible through Christ. This is part of Cyril’s anti-Jewish rhetoric, to which I have already referred. The salvation made possible through Christ is, according to Cyril, so far superior to the Mosaic Law, regardless of the benefits the law bestowed before Christ, that continued adherence to the law makes no sense to him. Central to the salvation made possible through Christ is the bestowal of the Holy Spirit, which the Jews did not and do not possess through the law.

That the Jews lacked, and continue to lack, the Holy Spirit is a point Cyril makes often. For example, Cyril uses Jacob’s departure from Laban as a launching point for a discussion of soteriology, focusing particularly on the fact that the Jews did not have the Spirit prior to Christ. Cyril argues that Jacob’s two wives represent different soteriological trajectories, as it were. Leah is a type of the “synagogue of the Jews,” and Rachel is a type of the “church of the Gentiles.”⁹² Cyril notes that Jacob kept quiet after Leah gave birth, as well as after his maidservants gave birth to his children, but after Rachel gave birth to Joseph, Jacob desired to leave and establish his own house. Cyril also notes that Joseph’s name means “added by God.” All of this for Cyril points to the eventual adding of Gentiles to the company of believers: “[O]nce the Gentile church had given birth to the new people of

92. PG 69: 232D.

God, that is, those who were ‘added,’ the Savior then prepared his own house for himself.”⁹³ By this Cyril refers to the indwelling of Christ in believers through the Holy Spirit, an indwelling not experienced by the Jews before Christ and not experienced by them now: “So he [Christ] dwells within us through the Spirit . . . and not in Israel. That the Jews who lived before Christ’s advent did not partake of the Spirit, speaking in a manner corresponding to the type, the most-wise John would make clear in saying, ‘For there was as yet no Spirit, because Jesus had not yet been glorified’ [John 7.39].”⁹⁴ The implications for the Jews’ lack of the Spirit are twofold. Not only do they lack the “Spirit of adoption” (Romans 8.15) by whom believers are made children of God, but they lack the ability even to comprehend their own scriptures. On this latter point, Cyril cites Paul’s reference to the veil that continues to lie upon the hearts of Jews when Moses is read (2 Corinthians 3.14–18), arguing that it is the Holy Spirit that enables Christians to interpret the scriptures correctly, that is, to see the mystery of Christ in them.

The presence of the Holy Spirit in Christians is so central for Cyril precisely because of the soteriological weight Cyril hangs on the Spirit in the *Glaphyra*. In the passage just examined, we saw that Cyril refers both to the indwelling of Christ and to the adoption of believers as children of God, both occurring through the Holy Spirit. As various studies have demonstrated, Cyril’s soteriology as articulated in works written after the *Glaphyra* focuses particular attention on the role the Spirit plays in transforming believers into the image of Christ.⁹⁵ The *Glaphyra* demonstrates that this emphasis on the Holy Spirit was a constant in Cyril’s thought from the beginning. Already in book 1, we find Cyril, in the midst of describing Christ in terms of the typology of the Second Adam, recounting human salvation in terms of being conformed to Christ through the Holy Spirit:

93. PG 69: 233A.

94. PG 69: 233B.

95. In particular, see Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life in Cyril of Alexandria*, and Hillis, “Pneumatology and Soteriology according to Gregory of Nazianzus and Cyril of Alexandria.”

So, as the image of the first man taken from the ground was imprinted upon us, which had to suffer death and be ensnared in the cords of corruption, thus also in the case of our second beginning after that first one, that is to say, Christ, *in whose likeness we are made through the Spirit*, incorruptible nature is impressed upon us.⁹⁶

And throughout the entire *Glaphyra*, Cyril reiterates over and over that we are united to Christ through the Holy Spirit. Believers “enjoy abundant union with [Christ] through partaking of the Holy Spirit by the goodwill of the Father.”⁹⁷ A “complete Christ dwells in each one through their partaking of the Holy Spirit,”⁹⁸ and those “who have been sealed by the divine Spirit” are “fashioned according to the beauty of the Son.”⁹⁹

Cyril thus connects the salvific work of the Spirit to the task of bringing us into transformative contact with Christ himself, often using the language of participation to illustrate the kind of union we have with the incarnate Word. And to do so, Cyril often cites 2 Peter 1.4 with its reference to becoming “partakers of the divine nature.” This is a verse to which Cyril had a deep connection, citing it throughout his works more frequently than any other patristic writer does.¹⁰⁰ 2 Peter 1.4 does not pop up as frequently in the *Glaphyra* as it does in later writings, but it still comes up with enough regularity to demonstrate how central it is to Cyril’s soteriological vision. Of particular interest is that, despite the fact that the Holy Spirit appears nowhere near 2 Peter 1.4, Cyril consistently associates partaking of the divine nature with the Holy Spirit in all of his works, including the *Glaphyra*. And in the *Glaphyra*, as he does elsewhere, he specifically associates our partaking of the divine nature through the Spirit with our partaking of Christ. “[W]e have also been united with [Christ] in another way,” Cyril writes, “because we have become ‘partakers of’ his ‘divine nature’ through the Spirit.”¹⁰¹ Elsewhere he writes that the Word has

96. PG 69: 28D. Emphasis mine.

97. PG 69: 148A.

98. PG 69: 425B.

99. PG 69: 409A.

100. Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 192, and “Partakers of the Divine Nature (2 Peter 1.4) in the Byzantine Tradition,” in J. Chrysostomides, ed., *Kathēgētria: Essays Presented to Joan Hussey* (Camberley: Porphyrogenitus, 1988), 52.

101. PG 69: 29C.

“been given to us according to our participation in him through the Spirit, and through [the Spirit] we have become ‘partakers of the divine nature.’”¹⁰² Twice in book 10, Cyril reiterates this point. He writes: “The real mediator is Christ, to whom we are firmly joined, since it is true that he came down into our estate and became a man, so that we ourselves ‘might become partakers of’ his ‘divine nature,’ being united to him by sharing in the Holy Spirit and by the grace of God.”¹⁰³ Later in the book, he again emphasizes our participation in Christ through the Spirit, citing 2 Peter 1.4: “For having become partakers of [Christ] through the Spirit, we have been united with God the Father through him, since we are indeed ‘partakers of the divine nature,’ in accordance with the Scriptures.”¹⁰⁴ Finally, in book 12, Cyril cites 2 Peter 1.4, writing that we partake of the divine nature through “the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us” through the grace of baptism.¹⁰⁵

These references to 2 Peter 1.4 in the *Glaphyra* point to three ideas I want to draw out. First, the fact that Cyril always associates 2 Peter 1.4 with the work of the Holy Spirit in the *Glaphyra*—an association he makes in his other writings—illustrates the centrality of the Spirit in his soteriology. That Cyril cites 2 Peter 1.4 more frequently than any other patristic writer does tells us how central this verse is in his soteriology; and that he almost always references the Holy Spirit in relation to this verse tells us of the key role the Spirit plays in his understanding of human salvation.

Second, Cyril emphasizes that it is by the Holy Spirit that believers are brought into transformative contact with Christ, and this emphasis indicates something of the particular focus Cyril places on the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Son in his trinitarian theology. Admittedly, this is a relationship to which he draws much greater attention in his later writings, where he goes so far as to use the language of procession with reference to the Spirit’s relationship with the Son.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, the *Glaphyra* shows that Cyril, from early in his career,

102. PG 69: 172D.

103. PG 69: 497C–D.

104. PG 69: 517B.

105. PG 69: 625C.

106. As Marie-Odile Boulnois notes, while Cyril’s theology of the Spirit’s procession is not developed sufficiently to allow definitive conclusions to be

draws particular attention to the Spirit's relationship to the Son through his focus on the way the Spirit, to whom he refers above as the "Spirit of Christ," draws us to the incarnate Word such that we partake of him. Although he would develop his trinitarian theology in later works like the *Thesaurus*, *Dialogues on the Trinity*, and his *Commentary on John*, we see in the *Glaphyra* insights he will express in these later works, particularly in drawing his readers' attention to the way the Spirit brings us to Christ.

Third, this emphasis on the Spirit's soteriological role vis-à-vis the incarnate Word plays out in one other way in the *Glaphyra*. In no small part because of his frequent references to 2 Peter 1.4 throughout his corpus, Cyril has been described as representing "the pinnacle in the development of teaching on *theosis*."¹⁰⁷ Without denying that *theosis* is an important facet of Cyril's soteriology, I want to draw attention to the way in which he fleshes out the notion of *theosis* in terms of divine filiation in the *Glaphyra*. Such an examination illuminates the soteriological nuances present in the text, and so in Cyril's thought as a whole.

In book 1, deciphering the spiritual meaning of Enosh, Cyril writes the following:

Though being of the earth, we have been called to adoption as children of the Master of all and to be brothers of Christ, who for our sakes became one of us, so that thanks to him we may possess a better estate, transcending that which is human, and through his grace and love for humankind become 'gods,' and enjoy his glory. For he declares, "I said, 'You are gods, and you are all sons of the Most High'" [Ps 82.6].¹⁰⁸

reached regarding the Son's precise role in the procession of the Spirit, he certainly "went further than many of his predecessors in affirming the dependence of the Spirit on the Son." See Marie-Odile Boulnois, "The Mystery of the Trinity according to Cyril of Alexandria: The Deployment of the Triad and its Recapitulation into the Unity of Divinity," in *The Theology of St Cyril of Alexandria*, ed. Weinandy and Keating, 75–111. For more on Cyril's understanding of the Spirit's relationship to the Son, see Hillis, "Pneumatology and Soteriology according to Gregory of Nazianzus and Cyril of Alexandria," 192–93, and idem, "The Holy Spirit and Episcopal Teaching Authority according to Cyril of Alexandria," 191–93.

107. P. B. T. Bilaniuk, "The Mystery of *Theosis* or Divinisation," in *The Heritage of the Early Church*, Orientalia Christiana Analecta 195 (1973): 351.

108. PG 69: 48B.

This is, in essence, a summary of Cyril's soteriology. He describes human salvation in terms of being drawn into a new relationship with God through Christ. This new relationship is not merely extrinsic, but is itself deeply transformative. This Cyril emphasizes when he writes that, through Christ, we "possess a better estate, transcending that which is human." Adoption as children of God is not for Cyril simply a matter of being called children of God, but of actually becoming children of God and brothers and sisters of Christ. And it is through the Holy Spirit that we are made children of God, as Cyril writes in book 3: "We were set free in Christ, through whom and in whom we are made rich with the divine Spirit from above. We have been assigned a place among the children of God, and 'we cry out *Abba*, Father' [Romans 8.15]." ¹⁰⁹ Later in the same book he writes that "we are included among the children of God through the Spirit of freedom" and "are admitted to Christ as to one who is like us, a brother." ¹¹⁰

This transformation to become children of God through the Holy Spirit revolves around Cyril's understanding that it is by the Spirit that we partake of Christ himself, and that through this partaking we become like Christ. This point Cyril makes particularly clearly in book 9. There, citing Psalm 22.22—"I will declare your name to my brothers, in the midst of the assembly I will sing praises to you"—Cyril expounds on the psalmist's reference to brothers, placing these words in the mouth of Christ: "For having taken human nature upon himself, and having brought himself down to our level, he is not ashamed to call us brothers, since through him we have been called to adoption." ¹¹¹ This adoption as children of God occurs because we are "enriched by way of conformity with [Christ] through sanctification in the Spirit." ¹¹² When in book 1 Cyril writes that Christ's "incorruptible nature is impressed upon us" through the Holy Spirit, it would appear that Cyril understands this transformation to translate into our becoming children of God through this union. ¹¹³ As he writes in book 8, "Christ encompassed us in light

109. PG 69: 125D–128A.

110. PG 69: 176B.

111. PG 69: 436B–C.

112. PG 69: 436C.

113. PG 69: 28D.

through the Holy Spirit, and through the Spirit he is within us, and in him we cry, 'Abba, Father' [Romans 8.15]."¹¹⁴

In later works, Cyril elaborates in much more detail about the Spirit's role in our adoption as children of God. In those texts he places heavy emphasis on the Spirit's relationship with the Son to explain how the Spirit conforms us to Christ to make us Christ's brothers and fellow children of God. In the *Glaphyra*, we see that divine filiation characterizes his soteriology early in his career. We see as well that the Holy Spirit plays a prominent and vital role in his soteriology, and that, as he will in his later writings, Cyril characterizes the Spirit primarily in terms of its relationship with the Son, to whom the Spirit draws the believer into transformative contact.

Conclusion

In the *Glaphyra* we find the reflections of a theologian and bishop near the beginning of his career, concerned with the continued presence and influence of Alexandria's Jewish community but also focused on providing a thorough literal and spiritual interpretation of the Pentateuch for his Christian flock. The care and effort Cyril expends in his interpretation reveals his conviction regarding the centrality of the scriptures for the Christian life. For Cyril, the scriptures provide moral and theological insight, and, relatedly, they bring Spirit-filled Christians into transformative contact with Christ himself, by and through whom we contemplate the Father. Overemphasis on Cyril's doctrinal works and/or his role in the Nestorian controversy can translate into an inadequate comprehension of his understanding of the pedagogical role of the bishop, his theology of biblical interpretation, and the ways in which his theology and soteriology are intertwined with scripture. Without exposure to his exegetical work, one is left with, at best, an incomplete picture of Cyril of Alexandria as a bishop and as a theologian. The translation of the *Glaphyra* you have in your hands thus provides a significant piece of the Cyrilline puzzle for English readers.

Gregory K. Hillis

¹¹⁴ PG 69: 416A.

PREFACE

PREFACE

By way of preface to the translation presented in this volume, the following information is provided on the textual basis of the present work and, as an orientation to aid the reader, on the style of translation and its format.

The Text

As is the case with many modern translations of patristic works, no critical edition of the *Glaphyra* exists to work from. In the latter part of the nineteenth century Philip Edward Pusey produced a multi-volume edition of a number of Cyril's works,¹ yet this did not include either of the two writings on the Pentateuch or the commentary on Isaiah.² Where a critical text is lacking, translators are obliged to resort to Migne's monumental *Patrologia* volumes.³ The present work therefore takes as its basic source the text appearing in *Patrologia Graeca* volume 69 (1864), where the *Gla-*

1. P. E. Pusey, ed., *Opera Sancti Patris Nostri Cyrilli Archiepiscopi Alexandrini*, 7 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1868–1877). These volumes contain critical texts of the commentaries on the Minor Prophets and John's Gospel, and some shorter non-exegetical works.

2. Robert C. Hill, trans., *Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on Isaiah, Volume 1* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2008), 4.

3. Modern translations abound that of necessity rely solely upon the *Patrologia Graeca* version of the original text. See, for example, Christopher Stade, *The Explanation by the Blessed Theophylact of the Holy Gospel According to St. Matthew* (House Springs, MO: Chrysostom Press, 2006), 4, which has as its only source text that found in PG 123; Robert C. Hill, *St. John Chrysostom, Old Testament Homilies, Volume 1: Homilies on Hannah, David and Saul* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2003), 135, n. 1, where the version published in PG 54 is identified as the basis; Hilda C. Graef, *St. Gregory of Nyssa: The Lord's Prayer, The Beatitudes*, Ancient Christian Writers 18 (New York: Paulist Press, 1954), which translates the Greek text appearing in PG 44; see p. 20.

*phyr*a occupies columns 13–678 in alternate blocks of Greek and Latin. This edition reproduces the earlier seventeenth-century (1638) text prepared by Professor Jean Aubert of Paris.

We are fortunate, however, that with respect to the *Glaphyr*a Migne and his editors decided to incorporate variant readings derived from another documentary source, a codex from the Harleian collection, which are listed at the back of the Migne volume. The quantity and manner of alternative readings in this manuscript are not substantial, many being simply minor variations in grammatical number, case, or verbal form. Nevertheless, these variants have been taken into consideration in the present work. The great majority of them would make no or only slight difference to an English rendering. Therefore, it is only those readings which differ more significantly that have been included. Yet even then, there is relatively little that is of major consequence. These variants from the Harleian Codex have been placed in footnotes (labeled as “Var.”), while the body of the text follows the main text appearing in Migne. In just a handful of instances, where the Harleian reading is unmistakably the superior, this has been translated in the body of the text. Such instances have again been indicated through the presence of a footnote.

Through this close similarity of the two versions given by Migne, there is some reason to believe that the original contents of Cyril’s commentary have been transmitted with reasonable accuracy.

The Translation

With regard to translation style, a deliberate attempt has been made to steer a middle course between literalness and dynamic equivalence. The reason for not wanting to depart too far from a literal rendering is in order that the scholar or student who consults the Migne volume may readily see how the English corresponds to the Greek, and so may be helped in piecing together the various semantic, syntactic, and grammatical elements within the latter. On the other hand, Greek and English are so diverse, especially in the freedom of order permitted in the former, that it

is of course impossible to follow consistently the ordering of constituents present in the original. Consideration has been given, therefore, to the question of naturalness in English, though it is freely conceded that where accuracy and naturalness have proved to be in conflict, priority has been given to accuracy.

Not only is there considerable divergence between the syntax and idiom of Greek and of English, but it is widely acknowledged that Cyril of Alexandria wrote in a particularly complex style of Greek, thus making the translator's task a difficult one.⁴ While some of the difficulty lies in Cyril's predilection for atticizing and neologisms, features that would not be apparent in English translation, he also has a fondness for overly long sentences and the use of doublets. This latter consists of his restating something in different, yet virtually synonymous terms, whether at the level of individual words, phrases, or entire clauses. In such cases, where English has comparably synonymous expressions—the majority of cases, in fact—the doublet has been retained in this translation. In the few cases where English lacks a suitable synonym, no effort has been made to reproduce the reduplicating form. With regard to long sentences, for the most part these have been divided into shorter units. On some occasions, however, where the flow of the Greek makes this difficult or impossible, a long sentence has necessarily been preserved.

In working through Cyril's Greek, two Latin translations were consulted. These are the Latin rendering printed alongside the Greek columns in the Migne edition, and another earlier, partial translation dating from the fifteenth century.⁵ Both, however, proved to be of very limited usefulness. Not only does each of the two adopt a relatively free style of translation, but it is also apparent that in the more difficult passages the translators strug-

4. On the character and complexity of Cyril's Greek, see Evie Zachariades-Holmberg, *Saint Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on the Book of Exodus, First Discourse*, Patristic Texts and Translations (Rollinsford, NH: Orthodox Research Institute, 2010), xv–xvi, where the author describes the works of Cyril as being “among the most difficult to translate.”

5. This is the parchment manuscript Beinecke MS 953, housed at the Yale University Library, which contains a Latin version of Books 1–4 of the *Glaphyra*. The document is accessible online at: http://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3838133?image_id=11075195.

gle to determine the sense, in which case they resort to questionable paraphrase. These Latin versions therefore often provide no safe guide as to Cyril's precise meaning. What makes this circumstance more significant is the unfortunate fact that several modern scholarly works that cite passages from the *Glaphyra*, and attempt to do so in English, lean heavily, and in some cases wholly, upon the sense of Migne's Latin translation.⁶

Key Terms

For Cyril, the literal meaning of the pentateuchal text (the ἱστορία, or *historia*) possesses a certain quality that he himself expresses by means of the term παχύς (*pachus*). In a physical sense, this denotes something that is "coarse" or "rough." When applied by Cyril to the Old Testament, its meaning approximates to "earthly" or "material."⁷ In order to rise beyond that which was merely earthly in the text, another altogether different approach had to be adopted. So in almost every instance, once Cyril has treated a text from the literal perspective, he then moves on to what he terms θεωρία (*theōria*), which basically means "contemplation." A fuller phrase would be θεωρία πνευματική (*theōria pneumatikē*), that is, "spiritual contemplation," indicating a spiritual sense.⁸ According to Cyril, this higher sense is always related to the mystery of Christ.⁹

6. As a case in point, the excerpts from the *Glaphyra* in the second volume on Genesis in the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture series, namely, *Genesis 12–50*, ed. Mark Sheridan, ACCOS 2 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), looking too much to the Latin as they do, regrettably do not furnish the reader with an accurate understanding of the Greek in a significant number of instances.

7. Cf. G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 1054a; and Alexander Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: Interpreter of the Old Testament*, *Analecta Biblica* 2 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1952), 45.

8. Bertrand de Margerie, *An Introduction to the History of Exegesis, Volume 1: The Greek Fathers*, trans. Leonard Maluf (Petersham, MA: Saint Bede's Publications, 1993), 244–45; Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 238–39.

9. de Margerie, *An Introduction*, Vol. 1, 244, where the author states, "The spiritual sense is always, for Cyril, in one way or another, relative to the mystery of Christ.... A scriptural sense that has no relation to the mystery of Christ cannot be spiritual; it can only be literal."

Apart from these terms that figure prominently in Cyril's exegetical approach, several other important terms require comment, and certain lesser ones also.

As is often the case in other languages, some Greek words either do not have a precise English equivalent, or have elements of meaning falling somewhere between two, or possibly more, English terms. One such word is λατρεία (*latreia*), which Cyril employs with reasonable frequency. It is this term that forms part of the title for his other great work on the Pentateuch, represented in Latin by *cultus*. According to the standard patristic lexicon λατρεία denotes "service," "worship," or "cult," in the sense of "mode of worship."¹⁰ There is, of course, some distinction in meaning between these English terms. In the present work, if the context allows us to determine the particular sense, then either "service" or "worship" is used accordingly. In those places where Cyril employs the word with reference to the whole Mosaic "cult" or system, then we have rendered it by "ministration."

A greater challenge is presented by the term οἰκονομία (*oikonomia*). This has found its way into English as "economy," and many translations of theological works are content to leave it that way. It is, of course, a technical term, having quite different connotations to the use of the word in modern English. The instance of οἰκονομία in Ephesians 1.10 is rendered "dispensation" (NKJV), "plan" (NLT), or "administration" (NASB), all of which capture definite components of the term. In later patristic writings, however, the usage of the word is closely associated with the Incarnation and the new era it initiated, since the divine plan centers upon that event. Perhaps the words of Frances Young, "the incarnation as an expression of God's providential and saving plan," are as helpful as any in unpacking the term.¹¹ In our translation it was felt that "economy" standing alone, though doubtless acceptable for those already familiar with the term, was insufficient. In those instances, therefore, where οἰκονομία is unqualified by any other descriptive term, it is here often expressed by the phrase "divine economy."

10. See Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 793.

11. Frances M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), 39.

For the benefit of those who are able to consult Migne's Greek text, a word of explanation is in order regarding one specific usage of the noun φύσις (*phusis*). This basically means "nature" or "essence."¹² In certain contexts, however, despite the fact that it is a feminine noun, φύσις very clearly occurs as a designation for God. In such cases the articular phrase, ἡ φύσις, appears, that is, "*the* Essence." For this we offer an English equivalent, "the Being."

When speaking of God as "Lord," Greek has the more usual κύριος (*kurios*), as well as the less frequent δεσπότης (*despotês*). Migne's Latin rendering of the *Glaphyra* represents both terms as *dominus*. In the present translation the distinction has been preserved, the former being represented by "Lord" and the latter by "Master."

Cyril makes use of a whole range of different words with reference to the types and figures of the Old Testament, including αἶνιγμα (*ainigma*), "figure, riddle"; παραβολή (*parabolê*), "parable, parallel"; τύπος (*tupos*), "type, impression"; εἰκών (*eikôn*), "image, representation"; παράδειγμα (*paradeigma*), "pattern, illustration"; and σκιά (*skia*), "shadow." Originally, in classical Greek rhetoric such terms would have had their own distinct connotations. Cyril, however, appears to treat them all as virtually synonymous.¹³ No attempt has been made to achieve complete consistency in our renderings of all these different terms, except that σκιά is regularly "shadow."

Corresponding to the various nouns above, there exists a comparable series of verbs, mostly compounded with the prefix προ- ("fore-" or "pre-"). Greek is a good deal richer here than English. These terms are mostly expressed in the translation by "prefigure." Where, however, the σκια- component is present in the Greek verb, some effort has again been made to reflect the original etymology and so to render it as "foreshadow."

Lastly, in common with a host of ancient Greek writers, Cyril is fond of the term πού (*pou*) when making citations. The lexicon entry for πού gives its sense as "somewhere."¹⁴ This can give the

12. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1496–97.

13. Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 64.

14. E.g., Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 1261a.

English reader the impression that Cyril is citing some indefinite source, or that the location of the quoted words has escaped his mind. Neither of these, however, need be the case. The word has found its way into the New Testament at Hebrews 2.6 and 4.4. Here English versions offer various translations, such as "in a certain place" (2.6, NKJV), "in one place" (4.4, NRSV), "as one text says" (4.4, NJB). All that the term means is that the place of the citation is not being specified, not that it is unknown. In the present work, where $\pi\omega\upsilon$ has been translated, we render it by phrases similar to the foregoing English versions. Yet in some instances, where the introduction to the citation is already sufficiently lengthy, encumbered with adverbial expressions or descriptive phrases, $\pi\omega\upsilon$ has been omitted.

Format

In the text printed in *Patrologia Graeca* 69, each book of the *Glaphyra* has been divided first into headed sections. A lower level of textual organization consists of a series of numbered subsections within the larger section. This basic framework has been preserved in the present translation. In addition to this, paragraph divisions have been introduced. Both the subject matter and the structure of the Greek have contributed to making a break at a particular point. Yet the position of these is still sometimes a subjective matter, and there is no intention to claim that each of these junctures has been placed at the best location in every instance.

Reference to the *Glaphyra* in later academic literature is generally made through the column number in the Migne edition. This basic reference system has been incorporated here. Numbers in square brackets, such as [150], therefore denote the beginning of a new column in Migne. In this connection readers should be aware that since the Latin columns also possess numbers, the numbering of the Greek columns is not consecutive. It is the consistent practice in Migne to print the Greek text in the half of the page nearest the inner binding, while the outer half of every page bears the Latin. The result, of course, is that a sequence of consecutive Greek columns would be numbered 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, and so forth (where columns 2, 3, 6, 7 are all Latin).

Footnotes

Above it was stated that variant readings (“Var.”) have been placed in footnotes. In addition to this information, other kinds of data have also been included in these notes. Where Cyril makes a biblical citation, the reference is provided by using the standard chapter-verse numbers as found in modern English versions. Where the LXX differs, the varying reference follows in brackets. Attention is also drawn to those places where Cyril’s Old Testament text departs to any significant degree from that of the LXX. On occasion alternate renderings have been given (“Or”), that is to say, a different way of translating the same Greek word or words. Seeing that the same original text might be rendered in several ways in English, an alternative has been proposed, for the most part only where it makes some difference to the understanding of the text. When a rendering has been necessarily free, a more literal translation (“Lit.”) may be provided in a note. Where it might be of interest to the reader to know the original term being used, Greek words are also sometimes noted, and where Cyril is discussing the meaning of Hebrew terms, these too are referenced in footnotes in transliterated form. Apart from the foregoing, other information considered helpful is presented, either to aid in understanding Cyril’s flow of thought, or on occasion to highlight inconsistencies in it.

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GLAPHYRA ON THE
PENTATEUCH, VOLUME 1
GENESIS

BOOK ONE: GENESIS 1–5

*That throughout all the writings of Moses the
mystery of Christ is signified figuratively*



YOU SEARCH THE Scriptures,”¹ Christ declared to the Jewish people. He was very evidently saying that in no other way would any be able to attain eternal life unless, by digging up the letter of the law as if for some treasure, they should diligently seek the pearl hidden in it, which is Christ, “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,”² as the blessed Paul says. Concerning this most noble and most wonderful wisdom or knowledge Solomon also said, “If you seek it like silver and search for it like treasures, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.”³

There is nothing equal to such a thing for those who commend the blameless life, who seek to perform the greatest and most excellent deeds and to fill their minds with the divine light. One should, therefore, feel inexpressible delight in the oracles of God, and consider the sacred Scripture a lamp, as it were, as the holy psalmist proclaims, “Your law is a lamp to my feet and a light to my paths.”⁴

So then, since to investigate earnestly the mystery of Christ is clearly and manifestly the means of obtaining eternal life and the way for us to attain all happiness, come, let us once again make the worthwhile effort, even before all else that concerns us, to gather together those elements through which the mys-

1. Jn 5.39.

2. Col 2.3.

3. Prv 2.4–5.

4. Ps 119.105 (118.105 LXX).

tery of Christ is especially [16] represented to us. Let us strive to explain thoroughly how each is to be understood, so that the things we discuss, opened up in detail, might at times be the cause of the most significant contemplations of truth, a good opportunity for those more ready to learn to do so, and be steps upwards, as it were, leading to the higher and better knowledge that is set forth in them.

Now we shall first present the literal events in a helpful way, making them suitably clear. Then, refashioning the narrative by bringing it out of type and shadow, we shall explain it with reference to the mystery of Christ, having him as the goal, since it is true that Christ is the end of the law and the prophets.⁵

If it should happen that we fail to explain the more appropriate matters through the weakness of our understanding or the presence of much obscurity, then it befits those who will read it to be forbearing. And at this point one ought to be aware that since we have composed seventeen books on the theme “Concerning Worship and Service in Spirit and in Truth,”⁶ and assembled a considerable mass of thoughts in them, we have deliberately omitted the topics⁷ covered there from the present work and have included what was left unexamined, though for necessary reasons it sometimes happens that mention is made of some of the same things.

So we now begin our comments⁸ upon Genesis, and make our way through the five books of Moses in order. Besides this, we shall also investigate matters from the other Scriptures relevant to our set purpose.

Concerning Adam

1. The most holy Paul, who was truly an expert in the law, reflecting upon the mystery of the salvation that comes through

5. Cf. Rom 10.4.

6. This is a reference to Cyril's other writing on the Pentateuch, generally known by its Latin title, *De adoratione et cultu in spiritu et veritate* (found in PG 68).

7. Or “chapters.”

8. Cyril here employs the term (*glaphurôterôn*, lit. “more elegant matters”) from which the present work receives its title.

Christ, states that in him there has been a "recapitulation"⁹ of things in heaven and things upon the earth by the good pleasure and will of God the Father.¹⁰ By the term "recapitulation" he clearly refers to the reformation of all things and the return of what has become corrupted to how things were in the beginning. This, it is reasonable to suppose, is what was being spoken of when God said through the mouth of the prophets, "Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I will do new things, which shall now spring forth, and you will know them."¹¹ Accordingly Paul, who himself had been brought up on the divine oracles, also indicated that the things prophesied in them had now been fulfilled, saying, "So that if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation; the old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."¹² For in Christ we have been transformed and have become a new creation. Also, in him alone we have become rich through the obtaining of a new name, for we are called by the name of Christ. The divine Paul further says concerning us, "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires,"¹³ for life for those in Christ is a matter of holiness, transcending carnal passions and earthly impurity. And that the new name by which we are called in Christ would be bestowed upon us is made evident when God declares through the mouth of the saints, "Those who serve me shall be called by a new name [17], which shall be blessed upon the earth; for they will bless the true God."¹⁴

Nobody, then, who cares to think correctly and reasonably can doubt that new things have come into being in Christ. So let us now examine the old state of affairs that once existed, and let it be stated how, out of that which was utterly powerless and defective, that is, out of that which was corrupted and which was unexpectedly brought down to a different state from how

9. This word (*anakephalaiôsis*) may have the general sense of "restoration," or the more particular sense of "a bringing together under one head."

10. Cf. Eph 1.9-10.

11. Is 43.18-19.

12. 2 Cor 5.17; cf. Rv 21.5.

13. Gal 5.24.

14. Is 65.15-16.

things were in the beginning, the reformation to something better came about. In doing this, one may correctly discern the goal to which the word set before us is heading, and see how to avoid error, and so he may not in any way depart from the true sense.

2. Now the God of all, being a Master Craftsman by his own all-effecting power, that is, by the Son, with respect to everything whatsoever that was made declares, "all things came into being through him, and not one thing came to be without him."¹⁵ In the beginning he formed heaven and earth before all else, and called them into being, though nothing then existed.

But if someone should ask how this is possible, he should hear from us well this wise and excellent saying: "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?"¹⁶ For if one wishes to inquire into these things, there is no doubt that he will be completely lacking in mental ability, in contrast to that¹⁷ which God is perceived to have. That our faculties are insignificant or as absolutely nothing in comparison with God, he himself clearly states: "For my purposes are not like your purposes, neither are my ways like your ways. For as the heaven is far from the earth, so is my way far from your ways, and your thoughts from my thinking."¹⁸ Let it be allowed, then, that extraordinariness and incomprehensibility are the touchstone concerning these things. For God creates as he himself knows how and as only he is able.

So in the beginning heaven¹⁹ and earth were brought forth; then the mass of the waters was drawn together into one space, for this was deemed necessary by him who said, "*Let the water be gathered into one place.*"²⁰ The land was uncovered, and thus was adorned all over with different forms of vegetation, producing the most exceptionally well-formed fruit trees.

Then the spheres of the sun and moon appeared, and there was a law from God that directed the rule of each.²¹ For it was

15. Jn 1.3.

16. Is 40.13.

17. Var. "the mind."

18. Is 55.8-9.

19. Or "sky."

20. Gn 1.9.

21. In Gn 1.16 the sun and moon are said to have been created "for ruling" (*eis archas*).

ordained that one should be for the day-time and light, and the other for the night-time and darkness. Also, the entire expanse of heaven itself was bedecked with stars for us. And when these things came into being, God gave a law and said, “*Let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years, and let them be for light in the firmament of heaven so as to shine upon the earth.*”²²

Since the Maker of all things is by nature life, he also wrought the same nature in the waters, the source of swimming creatures, and in the air, the source of birds.²³ He further commanded the earth to bring forth creatures of many kinds and species of wild beasts of the field. What seemed good to him he brought about instantaneously and incomprehensibly. Respecting each of the things that were made, [20] its Maker was the Word, and its origin was solely a command.

Now, though the orderly arrangement of those things that had come into being was pleasing to the Craftsman of all things, another consideration²⁴ at length entered upon the scene, introduced last of all, the one on account of whom those other things had been brought into existence, namely man. For it was necessary that the Maker of all things, being in nature good, or rather that which he is being goodness itself, should be known by us. It was necessary that the earth be filled with those who knew how to give him glory and, as it is written, from the beauty of created things the glory of the one who had made them was to be viewed. For as the prophet Isaiah said, “You did not make it (meaning the earth) in vain, but to be inhabited.”²⁵ It was essential, therefore, that a rational creature be formed upon the earth, where those things that appeared earlier serve for his enjoyment and are seen to have been made for his benefit.

So, having previously caused the earth and heaven and those things in them to appear, arranged as necessary, God came to the matter of fashioning man, whose creation was conceived be-

22. Gn 1.14–15.

23. Both instances of “source” in this sentence translate the Greek term literally meaning “mother” (*mêtêr*).

24. The noun *skepsis* is not easily rendered into English. It may denote something visibly seen (“a view”), or something mentally conceived (“a plan”).

25. Is 45.18.

fore all else. Now he had made all the rest of creation instantaneously, merely by speaking, forming it by his own word as God. Since, however, man is truly a comely²⁶ and godlike creature, while he may not be considered a representation of the most supreme glory, there is nothing equal to him among all that was made. God honored the making of this masterpiece with his own deliberation and personal involvement. Having sculpted man out of the soil, he made him into a rational creature, and, in order that he might replicate the rationality of his own nature, he immediately implanted within him an immortal,²⁷ life-giving Spirit.²⁸ For it is written, *And he breathed upon his face the breath of life, and the man became a living being.*²⁹

God then deemed man worthy of a garden³⁰ and its delights, and also assigned to him dominion over all that was upon the earth. He set him as ruler over fish and birds, and yoked to him herds of wild animals. He even subjected to him the different kinds of venomous creatures, just like the others. Also, as it was fitting that man should live fearfully, he commanded that he should be obedient to the laws of nature. So then, man was the image of the highest glory, and the representation of divine authority on earth.

But then it was absolutely necessary for the man who had come into such glory and delight to understand clearly that God held a position over him as his King and Lord. Lest man should fall by the considerable prosperity that was readily available to him, possibly even wishing to be freed from the authority and supremacy of him who ruled, God immediately issued a law and accompanied it with the threat of punishment should it be transgressed. For the practice of sin did not yet exist upon the earth,

26. Or "well-suited."

27. Var. add "and imperishable."

28. Elsewhere in his corpus, Cyril usually interprets Gn 2.7 ("he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life") as referring to the Holy Spirit. It is likely that he is doing so here when referring to the Spirit as "immortal" and "life-giving." See Marie-Odile Boulnois, "Le soufflé et l'Esprit: Exégèses patristiques de l'insufflation originelle de Gn 2, 7 en lien avec celle de Jn 20, 22," *RA* 24 (1989): 3-37.

29. Gn 2.7.

30. *paradeisos*.

as there was just one sole Being. But in order that man might also be under law, a certain manner of constraint was contrived for him, for it says, *"From every tree which is in the garden, you may eat for food. But from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you may not eat. On the day that you eat from it you will surely die."*³¹

Next, one of Adam's ribs was taken, and the woman was formed. She served him in the bearing of children, and being of the same nature she became his wife and continued to live together with him in single-hearted devotion.

Now when [21] the woman was carried away into transgression by the trickery of the devil and ate the forbidden fruit of the trees, so did our forefather Adam also fall with her, and human nature was straightaway condemned to death. To the woman God said, *"In pain you shall bear children,"*³² while to Adam he declared, *"Cursed shall the ground be in your labors."*³³ In addition to this, they were sent away from that most desirable estate of their former dwelling-place and from the delights of the garden. Only then did they learn that they were naked and without clothing, and in need of garments, yet God had compassion upon them, and so skins were given to them as tunics. And they were consigned to mother earth, and brought low by the cords of corruption. So there remained, it would seem, absolutely nothing for them in their extreme state of wretchedness.

3. What then? I imagine one might say that if man was going to fall into such a woeful condition, would it not reasonably be considered much better for him not to exist? Yet the one who was quickly to become wretched and pitiable, subject to a curse and punishment, God will render most eminent and admirable. So God was not in the least bit ignorant about what would happen, seeing that by nature he is the Maker. Since he acted in accordance with his knowledge, how could he not be taken as having acted harmfully rather than beneficially, if it truly was better for those who would fall into future wretchedness not to come into being, as the Savior himself said was the case with regard to the disciple who was a traitor, "It would be better for

31. Gn 2.16-17.

32. Gn 3.16.

33. Gn 3.17.

that man if he had not been born"?³⁴ In response to such things, I would say that it is extremely dangerous and approaches the point of complete madness, or rather even greatly surpasses it, not to honor the divine purposes as being just, or to suppose either that the Supreme Being perhaps had no regard for what was proper, or that he failed utterly in what was best and profitable for us humans. It would rather be more fitting to attribute to him blamelessness in his counsels and deeds, to avoid thinking beyond what one ought to think, and not to allow reprehensible meddling in these matters.

Moreover, I believe it necessary to consider whether for those who together with their existence also obtain a good portion, it were better not to have come into being. That it were better to exist and to partake of the Maker's goodness, in my opinion, nobody would doubt. While for those brought into existence who would come into a state of wretchedness, it might reasonably be taken as better and more desirable not to have obtained this existence; by the same token, I believe, to have come into existence and to live is an excellent and precious thing for those who would not at all come into such a condition.

So tell me, what is the answer? On my part, I would say in this regard that the matter is too exalted for us and even for those that are considerably higher than we are, by which I mean the blessed angels. These were, of course, made by God. Angels and archangels, thrones and authorities, powers and principalities, and also the most exalted seraphim, were brought from non-being into being. Even the serpent himself [24], the one who rebelled, came into being among the things that were made, and the evil powers with him. These were together with the other holy ones³⁵ and rational creatures; they filled the heavenly dwellings, were eminent in glory, and, having incomparable excellence, were considerably superior to us humans. And so it was said by God, "I made you with the cherubim."³⁶ The holy cherubim, however, have an innate glory, and they firmly maintain their own domain. Thousands upon thousands of them serve

34. Mt 26.24.

35. Var. "angels."

36. Ezek 28.14.

God, and myriads upon myriads stand before him. But Satan, along with others, fell and was deprived of his³⁷ glory. So, as he willingly turned away from his conflict with God and would forsake his own domain, and as fear would enter in, that is, with respect to the composition of the holy angels, Satan parted from the Maker of all things, and that most eminent and admirable creature was cast out. So how would God not be thought to have done wrong, unless there had been brought into being a multitude who stand before him and serve him, who remain true to God the Creator,³⁸ and who are not disposed to experience forgetfulness of their own domain?

Tell me, then, is it so very grievous if through their arrogance some utterly failed to obtain a good estate? Yet, those who are better than these stand in the presence of God and, being abundantly filled with his goodness, they honor him with long and unceasing doxologies. It was concerning these, I should think, that the blessed David said, “Blessed are all those who dwell in your house; they will praise you for ever and ever.”³⁹

In discussing these things in such a way, let us now bring our inquiry down also to matters that concern us humans ourselves, and let us examine these.

4. In the beginning man was made with control over his own will and with a disposition that was free to do whatever he chose, for the Deity, in whose likeness he was formed, is free. In no other way than this, it seems to me, could he obtain an excellent estate—if he was seen to be a willing doer of virtuous deeds, resolved to be fruitful, being pure in his actions, not performed as the product of natural compunction, by no means allowing himself to be drawn away from that which was good, even if he had the desire to do that which was not so.

So in the beginning man was assigned a free and unrestrained disposition of mind with respect to everything he did. But by the trickery of the serpent he was witlessly carried away into improper actions and committed transgression without any justification.

37. Var. add “original.”

38. Or “Designer” (*tektênamenos*).

39. Ps 84.4 (83.5 LXX).

Accordingly, he was condemned to death and corruption, although in this event God, I believe, foresaw some greater good.⁴⁰

Since man had turned aside into sin and his nature was now infirm through its inclination to commit base acts, in the same way perhaps as the unclean spirits, continual evil was to be found upon the earth. For this reason, the death of the flesh was determined. Yet the living creature was not consigned to complete destruction, but rather to renewal and, if we might say it thus, to a refashioning in the same way that a vessel which has been smashed is later made whole. [25] That in the meantime the living creature would in fact experience corruption, the Maker was not unaware, but he well knew that together with this there would be deliverance from those things that were improper and the removal of corruption, as well as the return to a better state and the restoration of those good things that were there in the beginning. For he knew that he would later send his own Son in human form to die on our behalf, and to destroy the power of death, so that he might have dominion over the dead and the living.

What then? Though not all have come to believe, the multitude of those who are saved is certainly a great number, exceeding that of those who perish. And with regard to these latter, God declares the feeling of grief to be un-worthwhile, saying in effect, "So they shall eat the fruit of their own way."⁴¹ For it is possible for them to be saved, if they wish, and to escape the harmful things that have since entered creation, yet they do not accept the Redeemer, who is Christ.

Now tell me, if one skilled in the art of cultivation filled his garden with the most beautiful of trees, but then it happened that they did not remain free from all those various kinds of things that were damaging to them, would someone suppose that he who wished to cultivate the land did not care to cultivate it in the right way? I think that no one would criticize him. Far from it! For that man gave the necessary attention to those trees when he planted them, yet they suffered harm. So then, shall we say that it would be better for certain people not to undertake

40. Lit. "something more beneficial" (*lusitelesteron*).

41. Prv 1.31.

any cultivation and for the garden not to abound in the most excellent trees, but rather to leave off all manner of cultivation, lest some of those things planted should come to harm? Would it not be utterly absurd to maintain that this is right?

5. We shall not, therefore, charge the Maker with wrongdoing when he brought things into existence. Rather, if we think aright, we ourselves should be accused of being so willing to suffer harm. For God understood that, as soon as he had brought man into being, he would fall into corruption. Nor was he ignorant of the manner in which this could be cured. The divine Paul, by the foreknowledge of the Spirit, testifies unambiguously to the antiquity of salvation through Christ. For thus he wrote to his own disciple, Timothy, "So do not be ashamed of giving testimony to our Lord or of me his prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling. This was not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and the grace that was given us in Christ Jesus before all ages and that has been revealed in the last ages through the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ."⁴² And to others he also said, "We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he should be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified."⁴³

Note [28] how it says that the grace that is in Christ was given before all ages, and that those who would be conformed to the image of his Son were evidently foreknown and predestined by God the Father. For the manner of the Incarnation, as I said, was foreknown, and the deliverance from infirmity was administered at the proper time. Paul again testified to this when he wrote, "To him who is able to strengthen us according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret for long ages past, but which has now been made manifest and through the prophetic Scrip-

42. 1 Tm 1.8-10.

43. Rom 8.28-30.

tures has been made known to all the nations by the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith, to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be glory for ever. Amen."⁴⁴

The mystery was indeed kept secret, but has now been made manifest through the law and prophets, according to the will of God the Father. For in Christ we have in fact been restored to our original estate, having been turned away from those things that have since entered in through the deceits of the devil. Paul thus said with regard to Christ the Savior of us all, "in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the richness of his goodness, which he lavished upon us with all wisdom and understanding. He made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to bring all things in heaven and upon earth together in him under one head,"⁴⁵ in Christ. In him we have also obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things after the counsel of his will, so that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory."⁴⁶

Again take note that we have indeed been predestined according to the purpose of the Father. We have been made rich, as it were, through a most ancient hope, God having foreknown the matter, prescribing in his own counsels what things would later be granted to us. For when the author of sin deceived Adam in the beginning, he made him to be guilty of the charge of carelessness, and so it came about that he was brought down to death. Then the punishment passed upon all men, this condition coming forth just as things grow out of a root. "For death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not"⁴⁷ sinned in the likeness of Adam's transgression."⁴⁸

Of necessity, therefore, the Maker made prior provision for his own creatures, and prepared for us a second root, as it were, of a

44. Rom 16.25-27.

45. *anakephalaiōsasthai*, "recapitulate." Cf. n. 9 above.

46. Eph 1.7-12.

47. Cyril, by accident no doubt, omitted the negative.

48. Rom 5.14.

race that would raise us back up to our former incorruption. So, as the image of the first man taken from the ground was imprinted upon us, which had to suffer death and be ensnared in the cords of corruption, thus also in the case of our second beginning after that first one, that is to say, Christ, in whose likeness we are made through the Spirit, incorruptible nature is impressed upon us. And just as the disobedience found in that first man brought us into punishment, so the total surrender and complete obedience in this second man made us to be partakers of heavenly blessing from the Father. For "the first man Adam," it says, "became a living soul [29], the last Adam a life-giving spirit."⁴⁹ It also explains this to us in other words when it says, "The first man was from the dust; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the heavenly man, so too are those who are heavenly. And just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, so we shall also bear the image of the heavenly man."⁵⁰ And again, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us."⁵¹ For "he humbled himself," as it is written.⁵² And the Only-Begotten Word of God voluntarily came down into our estate, not that he might be ruled over by death along with us, through Adam transmitting deadness to him, since he himself is the one who makes all things alive, but that having manifested that nature which was subject to corruption, he might transform it into life. This is the reason he became flesh. Thus the wise Paul writes, "For since through man came death, also through man came the resurrection of the dead. As in Adam all die, even so in Christ all will be made alive."⁵³

It is absurd to think that Adam, who was earthly and human, when the curse came upon him, could spread its effects upon the whole of the race, as a kind of inheritance, while Emmanuel, who was from heaven above and God by nature, who also possessed our likeness, having become a second Adam for us,

49. 1 Cor 15:45.

50. 1 Cor 15:47-49.

51. Gal 3:13.

52. Cf. Phil 2:8.

53. 1 Cor 15:22.

could not make the very ones who wished to participate in a relationship with him by faith to share abundantly in his own life. For through the mystical blessing we have indeed become fellow members of his body. Yet we have also been united with him in another way, because we have become “partakers of his divine nature”⁵⁴ through the Spirit. For he resides in the souls of the saints, as the blessed John also says, “By this we know that he is in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.”⁵⁵ He is himself, therefore, our life and our justification. Again it is written, “So then, as through the transgression of one man condemnation came upon all men, so also through the righteous act of one man there came justification and life for all men.”⁵⁶ And again, “For as through the one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also through the one man’s obedience many will be made righteous.”⁵⁷

It is apparent, then, how in the first Adam the mystery of Christ was then represented. It was not that an indistinguishable sameness between them was prefigured, but there was both a difference and a contrast in form. For Adam was the beginning of the race, with respect to death, the curse, and condemnation. But Christ was the complete reverse, bringing life, blessing, and justification. Adam received the woman as one flesh with himself, and came to ruin through her. Yet Christ, uniting the church to himself through the Spirit, rescues and saves her, and accomplishes better things for her than the devil did in his deceit. Thus we are encouraged to proclaim that “we are not ignorant of his schemes.”⁵⁸ Our forefather Adam, as the wages of sin and the punishment for transgression, received corruption [32]. Yet righ-

54. 2 Pt 1.4. Cyril cites from this verse more frequently than any other writer during the patristic period, and usually does so with reference to the Holy Spirit. See Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 213–14; Bernard Meunier, *Le Christ de Cyrille d’Alexandrie: L’humanité, le salut, et la question Monophysite* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1997), 163–65; Daniel A. Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life in Cyril of Alexandria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 144.

55. 1 Jn 3.24.

56. Rom 5.18.

57. Rom 5.19.

58. 2 Cor 2.11.

teousness was attributed to Christ, according to the insanity of the Jews, as an offense. So, because he suffered death he is crowned with honor and glory, as the blessed Paul says.⁵⁹ And while only a few things upon earth were subject to Adam, all things are subject to Christ. For to him every knee shall bow, of those in heaven, upon earth, and under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.⁶⁰ Amen.

Concerning Cain and Abel

1. As I said above, human nature, right at the beginning of the race in Adam, became subject to death and sin, and is redeemed in no other way except through Christ alone, for, as his disciple wrote, “There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”⁶¹ For it was necessary that he, through whom all things were brought into existence,⁶² should become the restorer⁶³ of what was corrupted, to nullify the debilitating effects of sin, to do away with pain, and also to bestow richly that good estate upon those who have come into being through him.

I for my part hold this wonderful restoration to be a work of divine power and authority, one that is able to bring things into existence out of that which does not exist, and to summon those things which are, to all intents and purposes, deprived of excellence and wholeness, and to bring them back to a good estate. While the outline of these things was indeed shown in Adam, one may also see the same no less depicted in those who were born to him. For in Christ, God the Father has brought together the things in heaven and the things upon earth under one head.⁶⁴ What had fallen into an unseemly condition is raised back up to its first estate. It is only through Christ, then, that those things which had intruded into creation are now gone

59. Cf. Heb 2.9.

60. Cf. Phil 2.10–11.

61. Acts 4.12.

62. Cf. Jn 1.3 and Col 1.16.

63. Or “renewer.”

64. See n. 45 above.

into nothingness, and that those things upon the earth are being restored into a renewed creation. For in him there is “a new creation,”⁶⁵ and this word is true.

Observe, then, that the mystery of Christ, through whom we have been saved, is also present in both Abel and Cain. Thus it is written in Genesis: *Adam knew his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain. And she said, “I have acquired a man through God.” She again gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel was a shepherd of sheep, while Cain worked the soil. And it happened after some time that Cain brought some of the fruit of the ground as an offering to the Lord. Abel too brought some of the firstborn of his sheep and of their fatlings. God had regard for Abel and his gifts, but he did not give heed to Cain and his offerings. Cain was greatly troubled and his face was downcast. Then the Lord God said to Cain, “Why are you grieved? And why is your face downcast? If you had offered it in the right way, yet not discerned it correctly, would you not have sinned? Be still, his attention will be on you, and you will rule over him.”*⁶⁶ After a short while Cain said to Abel his brother, “Let us go into the field.” And it happened when they were in the field that Cain rose up against Abel [33] his brother and killed him. The Lord God said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?” And he said, “I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?” God said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying out to me from the ground. And now you will be cursed from the earth which has opened up its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it will no more yield you its strength. You will be groaning and trembling upon the earth.” Cain said to the Lord, “My crime is too great for me to be forgiven! If you drive me away today from the face of the ground, I will be hidden from your presence, and I will be groaning and trembling upon the earth. And it will happen that whoever finds me will kill me.” The Lord God said to him, “Not so! Whoever kills Cain will suffer sevenfold vengeance.”⁶⁷ Then the Lord God placed a mark upon Cain, so that no one who found him would kill him. And Cain went out from the presence of God.⁶⁸

65. 2 Cor 5.17.

66. The pronouns “his” and “him” may also be translated as “its” and “it.”

67. Or “will be punished seven times.” The verb *ekdikeisthai* may mean either “be avenged” or “be punished.” In the subsequent treatment, of both this text and 4.24, Cyril takes it primarily in the latter sense.

68. Gn 4.1–16.

2. So Cain and Abel were both born to Adam. They were, so to speak, tender and blossoming shoots, growing up from the first root in the beginning. The human nature that they possessed sought to bear offspring. Though the act of increasing and multiplying was barely evident at first, later it became more prevalent.

Now Cain came forth first in order of birth. Then it is stated that Abel came after him. All the while they were tender and young, they were like any youngsters brought up together by their parents. But when the young men reached their adolescence, and from there came into adulthood, they turned to different kinds of work. As for Cain, he took pleasure, I believe, in the earth bringing forth vegetation, in seeing it abundantly flourishing with trees and being fruitful, producing diverse kinds of fruit in season. It seemed that he should give the earth a more pleasant appearance by the goodness⁶⁹ of those things that were to be seen. And these things, naturally delightful in themselves, were to some degree intended for this purpose of propagating beauty, though they may indeed be the product of agricultural labor, readily coming forth to make an incomparably wonderful sight. Certainly then, Cain was suited to living a life out in the fields. Applying all his energy, he had the desire of achieving this purpose. Nature likewise gave him understanding of these matters, and an unspoken divine law to some extent inscribed upon his mind the knowledge of those things he chose to do.

While Cain considered such matters to be worthy of exertion and much labor, the wise Abel, declining to labor over trees, to dig the soil and take up the sickle, devoted himself to flocks of sheep.⁷⁰ Perhaps he was given the inclination for this task by the lambs that one moment were scarcely able to bleat and that were still echoing weakly the sounds of their mothers, and yet were shortly leaping about on legs only recently become firm and feeding themselves on the grass, as well as the bleating goats darting about effortlessly upon the highest rocks. Abel, I believe, being extremely wise, deemed the life of a shepherd to be a most worthy lot, regarding it as something that in a way was a prelim-

69. Var. "fitness, usefulness."

70. Lit. "rams."

inary training for being in leadership over men, and that ruling was like this. With regard to those governing peoples, nations, cities, or populations [36], it is the custom both of the inspired Scripture itself and of the speech of the Greeks to call them shepherds. Certainly then, the two young men were differently inclined, one to working the soil, and the other to shepherding, which perhaps was something better.

When some time had passed and Cain's plantations had grown full and were laden with fine fruit, he made an offering. And Abel, there being such a numerous multitude of animals that he had gathered, also rendered what was due. Now there is within us a law of divine knowledge that is innate.⁷¹ This was drawing the men to the fact that it was necessary to present thank offerings to the Maker of all, to the God who gives us every good thing. For although the intention that men should recognize who it is that made all things has been corrupted and is perhaps not truly apprehended among those who worship idols, yet an innate and compelling law prompts us and an instinctive knowledge stirs us up, in order that we should perceive that which transcends all—the one who is incomparably greater than we humans are, that is to say, God.

So then, the holy and all-wise Abel brought the best of the flock, selected according to their quality, for it says, *he brought some of the firstborn of his sheep and of their fatlings*, that is, the most excellent and most outstanding animals. And as he was not ignorant of the manner in which to offer worship, he presented the fatlings. Cain, however, did not do this, but acted carelessly. The better part of his ripe produce he used to gratify his own excessive desires, and grieved the God of all by giving him the second best. So it was that fire came down from heaven upon Abel's gifts and consumed his offerings, but it says, *he did not give heed to Cain and his offerings*. For the expected fire did not issue forth upon the things that had been presented.

At this Cain was extremely vexed and terribly agitated. When he learned the cause of this rejection and that Abel had obtained a better outcome, he was not inclined to rectify his mistakes, but rather he became wild and unduly angry, more so than any other

71. Lit. "implanted," "inherent."

man, suffering the pangs of uncontrollable envy. Although he was, in effect, retaliating against the God of all for his rejection, he cunningly sought vengeance from his praiseworthy brother. He trampled the law of natural affection underfoot, and having a mind full of diabolical evil and profane scheming, he framed a fair speech, for he said, "*Let us go into the field.*" Note how he calls him into the fields, as though Abel might inspect the excellence of his cultivation and so that he might enjoy a view of the many different kinds of plants. But Cain acted profanely and delivered up his blood brother as a kind of firstfruits to death. So he instructed humanity in the way to commit murder.

When God inquired, saying, "*Where is your brother Abel?*" the wretched man lied and countered the question sharply by saying, "*I do not know.*" Yet once he was convicted as a murderer and subject to the curse, he believed that he himself would also die, though if God did not will this, there would be deliverance for him from the wrath of God. For he said, "*If you drive me away today from the face of the ground, I will be hidden from your presence, and I will be groaning and trembling upon the earth. And it will happen that whoever finds me will kill me.*"

That Cain, however, would [37] be altogether subject to a curse and would undergo the punishment for his profane actions through spending his life on earth in a most miserable way,⁷² God clearly affirmed when he said, "*Not so! Whoever kills Cain will suffer sevenfold vengeance.*"⁷³ Here he puts "seven" instead of "many." So it is as if the one who granted Cain bodily life were saying he would freely waive the punishment of the fratricide's many profane trespasses. Yet if one should wish to say that the number of deeds to be avenged⁷⁴ was in fact seven, it would not be at all difficult to enumerate them. First there was Cain's sin when he failed to distinguish correctly and did not set apart for God the most excellent of all his produce. Secondly, in learning of his sin he was not led to a change of heart, nor was he moved to correct his failings by the desire to do better. Rather, he was stirred to anger and provoked by the good conduct of his

72. Lit. "thrice-unhappily."

73. See n. 67 above.

74. Or "punished."

fellow man, whom he ought rather to have altogether admired, not considering him an enemy, nor unjustly viewing him with suspicion. Thirdly, his unrestrained envy was what set him on the path, as it were, of committing savage murder. Fourthly, the words "*Let us go into the field*" show trickery and deceit. Fifthly, there is the charge of profane bloodthirstiness. The fact that Cain told lies to God may be reckoned as his sixth transgression. And for the seventh, although God did not will it, Cain supposed that he was able to escape punishment completely, and not be removed from life in the body against his will. But it says, *God placed a mark upon Cain, so that no one who found him would kill him. And Cain went out from the presence of God.* So he was immediately placed under a curse, and the life of an outcast ensued. For how indeed might that perfectly pure and most holy Being have looked upon one who had now reached the height of all evil?

3. Up till now these matters have been expressed to us in a literal way by means of earthly⁷⁵ events. Yet if we change the picture that is outlined, as it were, into one that is colored, and refashion the shadow of the letter into the reality, and, come now, if we examine each of these things in great detail, then we may say that one can perceive the mystery of Christ foreshadowed by what happened long ago. For when human nature had become disposed towards⁷⁶ sin and was unexpectedly caught by the snares of death, it was necessary that the mystery of the restoration to a better state should be announced beforehand, and that Christ, who would later die on our account and for our sakes, should not be unknown.

So our forefather Adam was made, according to the faith contained in the sacred Scriptures, *in the image and likeness of God*.⁷⁷ Then Cain was born first and came forth from Adam, and Abel was born second after him. Now Cain we take as representing Israel. Thus Christ himself considered it appropriate to indicate that the people of the Jews were of the same character as Cain. For he said to them, "If you abide in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will

75. *en pachei*.

76. Var. "fallen into."

77. Cf. Gn 1.26–27; 5.1.

set you free.”⁷⁸ But they, although they did not understand the wonderful manner of freedom enjoyed by the patriarchs, undertook to boast of fleshly glory, saying, “We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. How can you say [40], ‘You will be made free’?”⁷⁹ What did Christ say in response to this? “If you were children of Abraham,” he said, “you would do the deeds of Abraham. But now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth which I heard from the Father.”⁸⁰ This is not what Abraham did.”⁸¹ He then identifies Satan as their father, saying, “You do the deeds of your father. That one was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth. For he is a liar and the father of lies.”⁸² We would not in any way maintain, if we interpret this correctly, that Christ was speaking of the original demon of evil. Rather, for these raging Jews who bore feelings of such profane murderousness against him, he makes the first murderer and liar, namely Cain, to be their father, and Satan, the author of sin, to be Cain’s father. We will grant that some further teach that the devil had a father, or we may say that there was some kind of archetypal form of his depravity. Yet it is to the example provided by Cain, being, as it were, a kind of pattern, that Christ ascribes those who are said to be diseased in every respect with the same profanity that was in Cain. That it was the practice of Christ the Savior to call “Satan” those who resembled him in character, we can see without the least difficulty when he said to the holy disciples, “Did I not choose the twelve of you? Yet behold, one of you is a devil.”⁸³

So Israel, of which it was written, “Israel is my firstborn son,”⁸⁴ is compared to Cain. Then after Israel the firstborn, second in order of time came Christ, the youngest son. He was himself also a son of Adam, and so he wisely and appropriately everywhere calls himself the Son of Man.⁸⁵ Now Israel in fact thought

78. Jn 8.31–32.

79. Jn 8.33.

80. Var. “from God” (as Jn 8.40).

81. Jn 8.39–40.

82. Jn 8.44. Lit. “the father of him.”

83. Jn 6.70.

84. Ex 4.22.

85. The Hebrew name Adam means “man,” “human being.”

they were honoring God by offering things that were transient and temporary, things of very little account, and their whole mind was set upon earthly concerns. For Cain gave himself to tilling the soil, while Abel was a herder of sheep. So Emmanuel was leader of the spiritual flock, and he is the good shepherd, feeding the heavenly and earthly flocks in a fertile place and on good pasture, as it is written.⁸⁶ To him also the prophetic word declares, "Shepherd your people, the sheep of your inheritance, with the staff of your protection."⁸⁷

Israel, then, actually thought it fit to honor God with what was most earthly, offering up those things prescribed in the law, and yet were dedicating these sacrifices to him in an unwilling manner. Therefore, Israel was told through the mouth of the saints,⁸⁸ "I do not desire the burnt offerings of your rams, nor the fat of sheep, nor the blood of goats and bulls, neither shall you come to appear before me. For who has required these things from your hands? You shall no more tread my courts. If you bring fine flour, it is in vain; incense is an abomination to me."⁸⁹ And again, "Why do you bring me frankincense from Sheba, and cinnamon from a distant land? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, and your sacrifices have not been pleasant to me."⁹⁰ This is evidently the same as when God paid no heed to the offerings of Cain.

The righteous Abel, however, who is Christ [41], offers to God the firstborn of the spiritual sheep, that is, those who are tender-hearted, childlike with respect to evil, excelling in virtue, and bearing the glory of the firstborn through sharing in his image. For the multitude of those called through faith to sanctification are designated by the divine Paul as "the assembly"⁹¹ of the firstborn, whose names are registered in heaven."⁹²

So Christ has now become the officiating priest of this holy

86. Cf. Ezek 34.14.

87. Mi 7.14. The addition of *phulakês sou*, "of your protection," to the citation is unique to Cyril.

88. Var. "saint." By this term Cyril means the holy prophets.

89. Is 1.11-13.

90. Jer 6.20.

91. Or "church."

92. Heb 12.23.

multitude and of the flock of the firstborn. "For through him we have access in the Spirit to God the Father."⁹³ We have become an offering that is good and acceptable, more so than a young calf with horns and hooves. For indeed, access through the blood of animals is base and earthy, and offers no pleasant aroma to God. Yet the worship that is in spirit⁹⁴ and through Christ is greatly pleasing to the Father. And so to the people of Israel who offer earthly things, God declares, "I will not receive calves from your home, nor goats from your flocks, for every wild animal is mine, and the cattle and oxen on the mountains. I know all the birds of the sky, and the beauty of the field is mine. If were hungry, I would not tell you; for the earth is mine and all it contains."⁹⁵ But to us who are justified in Christ and sanctified in the Spirit, he proclaims, "Offer to God a sacrifice of praise, and pay your vows to the Most High. Call upon me in the day of your affliction, and I will deliver you, and you will glorify me."⁹⁶ Surely then, spiritual offerings are better than those given from the earth, and the offering made through Christ is much more excellent than offerings made according to the law.

So God did not favor the offerings of Cain, but those of Abel. And for what reason? Israel did in fact rightly make offerings, for it was necessary to sacrifice to God. Yet they did not have the correct discernment, but were always attending to types, supposing that God rejoiced in those things that were in the form of shadows. Therefore, Israel sinned and were commanded to be still, that is, to cease from the old practices of the law and to receive Christ as their ruler. For it was said to Cain, "*You have sinned. Be still,*" and with regard to Abel, "*His attention will be on you, and you will rule over him.*"⁹⁷

If Israel had wanted access to God without recourse to earthly things, abandoning the unprofitable ministration according

93. Cf. Eph 2.18.

94. Cf. Jn 4.23-24. As noted in the introduction, Cyril devoted his first treatise on the Pentateuch, *De adoratione et cultu in spiritu et veritate*, to the idea that Christians, in contrast to the Jews, worship "in spirit and in truth."

95. Ps 50.9-12 (49.9-12 LXX).

96. Ps 50.14-15 (49.14-15 LXX).

97. See n. 66 above.

to the law, and if they had accepted Christ as their leader and guide for the way to something better, then they would have been made free along with us, and been entered in "the book of the living," as the Scriptures say.⁹⁸ Since, however, like Cain they considered the good character of our Savior as an occasion for envy and an incitement to murder, they fell under a curse and became liable to a sevenfold punishment.⁹⁹ For those wretched people became subject to many punishments and had to endure harsh penalties, perpetually *groaning and trembling*. For they were everywhere treated as strangers and outsiders, and they were fearful, lacking the self-determination which it is most proper for free people to possess.

Nevertheless, Cain received a sign that he would not be killed.¹⁰⁰ For Israel as a whole did not perish, but a remnant was saved, in accordance with [44] the words of the prophet who, having knowledge of this, declared it ahead of time, saying, "Unless the Lord of hosts had left us a seed, we would have become like Sodom, and we would have become the same as Gomorrah."¹⁰¹ Also with regard to this, the divine singer beseeched the God of all that Israel should not totally be destroyed, saying, "Do not kill them, lest they forget your law."¹⁰²

Yet Cain departed from the presence of God, for it is written that *Cain went out from the presence of God*. So the people of Israel experienced something such as this, concerning whom it is spoken through the mouth of the prophet, "When you stretch out your hands to me, I will turn my eyes away from you; and if you offer many prayers, I will not listen to you; for your hands are full of blood."¹⁰³ For they killed the Lord of all, and in their great profanity were so bold as to say, "His blood be upon us and upon our children."¹⁰⁴

The blood of Abel cried out, one would suppose, only against his murderer, but the precious blood of Christ cried out against

98. Cf. Ps 69.28 (68.29 LXX); Phil 4.3; Rv 3.5; 13.8, etc.

99. See n. 67 above regarding the twofold sense of the word.

100. Var. add "that anybody who found him would not kill him."

101. Is 1.9.

102. Ps 59.11 (58.12 LXX).

103. Is 1.15.

104. Mt 27.25.

the cruelty and offensiveness of the Jews. Moreover, it delivered the world from sin,¹⁰⁵ since it was shed for it. That is why the divine Paul said that we who have been justified by faith have come near through "the sprinkled blood that speaks better things than that of Abel."¹⁰⁶ And it would be appropriate, I believe, to apply this to the things that have been stated.

Now after Abel had died, it says, *Adam knew his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to a son, and called his name Seth, saying, "God has raised up for me another son¹⁰⁷ in the place of Abel, whom Cain killed."*¹⁰⁸ Then, after that it says, *Adam lived two hundred and thirty years, and he became the father of a son in his own form and in his own image, and he called his name Seth.*¹⁰⁹

Note then, that after Abel's death, another son, Seth, was born, resembling him who was the image and likeness of God, that is, Adam. And so after Emmanuel died with respect to his flesh, he immediately brought forth another child for Adam, one who in himself possessed the surpassing beauty of the divine image in great abundance. For we who believe in Christ are formed anew through the Spirit. That the death of Christ was, as it were, the root and cause of this manner of people, he himself affirmed, saying, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."¹¹⁰ So when like a grain he fell into the ground, he was like an ear of wheat, but later he bore fruit, and human nature was refashioned in him, brought back to the original image, to be just as the first man was.

4. It is also worthwhile for us to inquire into the progeny of both Cain and Seth, for to do so would certainly be of further profit to us.

It is written thus: *And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and gave birth to Enoch,¹¹¹ and he was a builder of a city, and he named*

105. Var. "it presented to the world the forgiveness of sin."

106. Heb 12.24.

107. Lit. "seed," "offspring" (*sperma*).

108. Gn 4.25.

109. Gn 5.3.

110. Jn 12.24.

111. Cyril in fact here writes "Enos." Both the Hebrew text and the LXX

*the city after the name of his son, Enoch. To Enoch was born Irad. Irad became the father of Mehujael, Mehujael the father of Methuselah, and Methuselah the father of Lamech. Now Lamech took for himself two wives. The name of one was Adah, and the name of the other was Zillah. [45] He said to his wives, Adah and Zillah, "Hear my voice, you wives of Lamech; give ear to my words. For I have killed a man for wounding me, even a young man for injuring me. Since Cain is avenged seven times, Lamech shall be avenged seventy-seven times."*¹¹² In these words you have a plain account of the progeny descended from Cain. Let us now also look at the progeny of Seth.

It is further written: *Seth lived two hundred and five years and became the father of Enosh.*¹¹³ Concerning Enosh the sacred Scripture says, *He hoped to call upon the name of the Lord God. And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years, and then he died. Enosh lived a hundred and ninety years and became the father of Kenan. And all the days of Enosh were nine hundred and five years, and then he died. Kenan lived a hundred and seventy years and became the father of Mahalalel. And all the days of Kenan were nine hundred and ten years, and then he died. Mahalalel lived a hundred and sixty-five years and became the father of Jared. And all the days of Mahalalel were eight hundred and ninety-five years, and then he died. Jared lived a hundred and sixty-two years, and became the father of Enoch.*¹¹⁴ Then it says, *And Enoch pleased God, and he was not found, because God took him away.*¹¹⁵

We note, then, before anything else how those descended from Cain are named, and how the account of successive generations takes its course. The fact is, the length of the life of each one, in terms of the number of years, is not expressly presented, as is obviously the case with those born from Seth. For there the

read "Enoch" at this point. Evidently, Cyril confuses the first son of Cain (Gn 4.17) with Enosh, the first son of Seth (v. 26). In the list that follows in this section, the names are made to conform to the forms appearing in modern English versions, which for the most part consist of transliterations from the Hebrew.

¹¹² Gn 4.17-19; 23-24. Again note the comment in n. 67.

¹¹³ Gn 5.6.

¹¹⁴ Gn 4.26; 5.8-9, 11-12, 14-15, 17-18.

¹¹⁵ Gn 5.24. The verb *metethēken* may also be rendered "translated," "transferred."

age of each one is precisely recorded, how long he lived, both before and after the birth of his children, that one might learn from the sacred Scriptures with more exactness and in greater detail. So how God did not suffer himself to know the life of those who loved sin is not an irrelevant piece of information for those who care to investigate such matters thoroughly. Accordingly, at the divine judgment seat those people will hear Christ saying, "Truly I tell you, I never knew you."¹¹⁶ Now it is indeed the case that there is nothing that escapes the knowledge of the God of all things. Although in one sense, however, he knows those who love sin, in another sense he does not know them, since he is greatly indisposed towards them.

Therefore, in the case of those descended from Cain, the period of their life is passed over in silence. For they had surely done nothing worth remembering, but rather things that probably would be to the detriment of those who would read about them in this record. And so they are not mentioned by God, and quite rightly. He deems it pertinent to know the lives of the saints in detail, and nothing, it seems to me, of the lives of those who have forsaken a divine and undefiled mind. Our Lord Jesus Christ affirms the truth of this when he says, "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them falls to the ground apart from our Father in heaven. And even the hairs on your head are all numbered."¹¹⁷ Now if even the number of their hairs is considered of interest to God, in that he clearly knows everything about them and does indeed care for them, how could it possibly [48] be that their very lifespans should be unknown? "For the eyes of the Lord," it says, "are upon the righteous."¹¹⁸

Also Enoch, the next in line immediately after Cain, had a city on earth named after him. Yet in the matter of the degree of glory that will belong to the saints, they should think and say, "Here we have no lasting city, but we are looking for the one that is to come, whose designer and maker is God."¹¹⁹ They consider their life in this world to be a sojourning, and describe it as such.

116. Mt 7.23.

117. Mt 10.29-30.

118. Ps 34.15 (33.16 LXX).

119. Heb 13.14; 11.10.

So the divine David sings in a certain place, "Spare me, because I am a stranger in the land and a sojourner, as all my fathers were."¹²⁰ But with regard to those who mind earthly things, he says in the Forty-eighth Psalm, "They called their lands¹²¹ after their own names."¹²²

Now the divine Enosh came forth from Seth. About him it is written that *he hoped to be called by the name of the Lord his God*.¹²³ For in Christ the holy and sacred progeny live in the hope of a glory that transcends our human estate. Though being of the earth, we have been called to adoption as children of the Master of all and to be brothers of Christ, who for our sakes became one of us, so that thanks to him we may possess a better estate, transcending that which is human, and through his grace and love for humankind become "gods," and enjoy his glory. For he declares, "I said, 'You are gods, and you are all sons of the Most High.'"¹²⁴

So Enosh hoped that others would call him by the name of the Lord his God, that is, "god." For since he was renowned as one who was admired for the splendor of his piety, some of the more refined sort of men who wished to bestow upon him the highest honor called him "god."

Let us, then, receive these words according to their proper intent. For the Jews, who are also representations of the offspring of Cain, because they exist, are known by the God of all. That they, however, are not registered in the book of life is evident from the fact that the lives of those descended from Cain are passed over in silence. That the progeny who are in Christ

120. Ps 39.12-13 (38.13-14 LXX); 119.19 (118.19 LXX).

121. Cyril mistakenly writes *genôn* ("generations," "families") for *gaiôn* ("lands"), possibly due to the presence of *genea* in the immediately preceding colon of the psalm.

122. Ps 49.11 (48.12 LXX).

123. Gn 4.26. Contrary to his first citation of these words earlier in this section, Cyril here alters the sense of the LXX, "to call upon the name," to the passive expression "to be called by the name." Indeed, it is not impossible that the text of the LXX itself may be rendered "to be called *the name of the Lord his God*," where the italicized words serve as a complement to the passive verb. By his change, therefore, Cyril may have believed he was bringing out a meaning inherent in the biblical text.

124. Ps 82.6 (81.6 LXX); cf. Jn 10.34.

are registered in the book, and also in God's memory, may be demonstrated, I believe, by the fact that the lives of the righteous, namely those descended from Seth, have been expressly recorded.

Now Enoch, being the second in line immediately after Cain, had a city named after him. Likewise, the wretched Jews are mindful only of the things of the earth, as they do not know the assembly¹²⁵ of the firstborn, nor do they strive to attain the heavenly city. But the son born to Seth, that is, Enosh, will be highly approved, for he is now called "god" by name. So through faith we who have run to Christ have been made rich with the same glory, being firmly established through our hope in him.

I would further add another important observation to the things I have said. If one cared to trace the genealogies from Cain and Seth beginning with Adam, who was, as it were, the root of each of them, he would in fact find that Lamech is the seventh in the line of descent through Cain, and that Enoch is the seventh in the line through Seth. The listing of the descendants in both lines is as follows: Adam, Cain, Enoch, Irad, Mehujael, Methuselah, Lamech; and Adam, Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch.

Let us note, then, what it says about each of these two—Lamech and Enoch. Lamech spoke to his wives [49], and said, "*Hear my voice, you wives of Lamech; give ear to my words. For I have killed a man for wounding me, even a young man for injuring me. Since Cain is avenged seven times, Lamech shall be avenged seventy-seven times.*"¹²⁶ But by faith righteous Enoch was taken away so that he would not see death, as the blessed Paul declared, *and he was not found, because God took him away.*

For in the latter times when the Sabbath rest in Christ came into being, Israel was indeed fearful, appearing to have fallen under the dread of punishment, like someone who had killed a man, and who was being judged over the matter of shedding holy blood. Yet they were much more fearful than Cain was. For he who acted wrongfully against a man like us became liable to a sevenfold punishment, but those who treated Emmanuel him-

125. Or "church."

126. See n. 67. For "not see death," see Heb 11.5.

self so profanely have been held to account much more severely. For Cain was avenged seven times, and the offspring of Israel seventy-seven times. Indeed, punishment will follow profane deeds in due proportion.

Those, however, who, since the time of Christ's coming, have been approved through faith in him may no more be found when Satan seeks them. For they will be taken by God to an incomparably better and more wondrous life with him, removed from death and corruption to everlasting life, from concern with things of the flesh to desiring to do the things that please God, from dishonor to glory, from weakness to might, in Christ Jesus our Lord, through whom and with whom, be glory to the Father,¹²⁷ together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

127. Var. "to God the Father."

BOOK TWO: GENESIS 6–14

Concerning Noah and the Ark



NOAH WAS A GOOD man and a genuine lover of God in the highest degree, putting his own virtuous conduct before all else. Since he was eminent and famous, of very good reputation, highly acclaimed, and much adorned with glorious achievements, he was suitably admired.

So the account proceeds with regard to Noah; and, since it establishes the course of events that happened as a picture and type, as it were, of the salvation through Christ, it would, in my opinion, be of immeasurable profit to the readers. Come then, and let us describe, as we are able, each detail concerning him, refining the earthiness¹ of the literal sense, and skillfully² transforming the things that occurred visibly into matter for spiritual contemplation.

2. Now Seth was born to Adam after the slaying of Abel. And from Seth there came Enosh, who hoped to be called by the name of the Lord his God.³ [52] So Enosh was called “god” by his contemporaries. For admiring the great degree of righteousness that he possessed, they forthwith called him “god,” it being especially fitting for them to assign a name to the man according to his virtue.

Descended from Enosh, the one named “god,” there were others, after whom came Lamech, the father of Noah. At the birth of the child, he showed himself to be a prophet, just as Zechariah did at the birth of the blessed Baptist. For Lamech named his son Noah, which, when translated into our language,

1. *to pachos*, also “roughness,” “coarseness.”

2. *asteiôs*, “elegantly,” “delicately,” “subtly,” “in a refined manner.”

3. Cf. Gn 4.26 LXX. See the comment in Book 1, n. 123.

means "rest." Lamech gave the reason why he called him this, saying, "*This one will bring us rest from our labors, and from the earth that the Lord God has cursed.*"⁴ Thus it was with this radiant and most wonderful hope that the birth of Noah was announced to those of long ago.

Noah was the tenth from Adam in the genealogy through Seth. Leading up to him, those descended from Enosh, the one called "god," were duly called "gods" by all others. Then it says, *Noah was five hundred years old and he became the father of three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.*⁵ When translated from Hebrew into Greek, Shem means "perfection" or "plant,"⁶ Ham means "heat," and Japheth "widening."⁷

Then the sacred Scripture says, *It happened that when there began to be many men upon the earth, and daughters were born to them, the sons⁸ of God, seeing that the daughters of men were beautiful, took wives for themselves of all that they chose. Then the Lord God said, "My Spirit will not remain among these men for ever, because they are flesh. But their days will be a hundred and twenty years." Now there were giants upon the earth in those days, and also after that.⁹ And when the sons of God went into the daughters of men, they bore children to them. Those were the giants of old, the men of renown.*¹⁰

So when the human race had greatly increased in number, the sons of God, it says, had an excessive and untoward desire for women, and they took wives for themselves of all that they chose. Now we are aware that certain manuscripts clearly contain *the angels of God, seeing the daughters of men*. And so some reject the view that men are being accused of the love of the flesh and fasten the blame upon fallen angels who did not keep to their own domain, according to what is written.¹¹ For my part,

4. Gn 5.29.

5. Gn 5.32.

6. In actual fact, Shem in Hebrew means "name." Cyril gives correct meanings for the other two names.

7. Or "enlarging."

8. Var. "angels." This reading for the text of Gn 6.2 is found in Codex Alexandrinus and several minuscules, and is also that adopted by Philo and Josephus.

9. Or, "and also after that when ..."

10. Gn 6.1-4.

11. Jude 6.

I would say, and indeed affirm, that all manner of disordered thinking would suit these beings, but to allow this as an explanation of this event would be to take things far beyond what is reasonable, and would, in my view, be quite out of place. For our aim is to be disposed to examine the truth of each thing that is written, and not at all to give undue consideration to the disorders of the horde of demons.

We should look especially to the lusts that always accompany the innate inclinations that are within us ourselves. The fact is, [53] we either love the passions of the flesh, or we tend to attach too much importance to those things which pertain to the flesh. Yet, it rightly seems to me, the desire for pleasure does not carry us beyond the bounds of natural laws. We could say that food and drink, or perhaps physical relations with women, are actions and passions of the flesh. Also, by the desire for riches and glory men serve the pleasures of the flesh. Indeed, almost every passion that is in the world comes through these things, as was stated by the wise disciple¹² with respect to “everything in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.”¹³ The intense and powerful lusts of this kind easily entangle us, so that our minds become fixed upon wanting and doing the things of the flesh. There is no argument, however, that could induce us to desire those things outside the body which are contrary to nature.

How then could it not amount to folly to say that spirits, which are distinct from and high above flesh, desire fleshly things? What manner of natural inclination could there be, or what kind of principle could provoke them to act as we ourselves most certainly do, that they should long after those things that arouse the passions? Indeed, we are not here removing any blame from the mass of demons, for they are unholy and profane, disposed towards anything whatsoever that is shameful. Moreover, it can seem that, together with these other things, they might even have a morbid craving for pleasures that are contrary to nature. When, however, the divine Scripture speaks of how the sons of God came together with women, they brought forth those called

12. Var. “as the wise disciple understood, saying ...”

13. 1 Jn 2.16.

giants, that is, extraordinary, wondrous beings, though they were rational humans nevertheless. What then ought one to think with regard to this? It was not, in fact, through spirits separated from flesh that the conception of humans in the women came about. Yet some do speak rashly about the matter and misrepresent it, and by means of what they imagine to be persuasive arguments they erroneously make it mean what is impossible. For they say that the evil demons came into men and conceived offspring through them. But we shall find their opinion to be extremely incongruous and full of ignorance. For how is it that we should accept what the divine Scripture has not stated and reckon it as being among those things that are true?

So let us read on: *The sons of God, seeing that the daughters of men were beautiful, took wives for themselves of all that they chose.* The explanation given by other interpreters further confirms that we have correctly read the Scripture in this matter. For Aquila in fact says, *The sons of the gods, seeing the daughters of men*, while Symmachus,¹⁴ in the place of *sons of the gods*, has put *sons of the mighty*. So here it calls those descended from Seth and Enosh the sons of the gods and of the mighty on account of their piety and their love of God, and the ability to overcome, with God's help no doubt, all that opposes them. God showed forth that most sacred and holy race¹⁵ to be illustrious, unmixed with the other race, that is, with those descended from Cain, and also from Lamech, who followed in the footsteps of his father and became a murderer, for he confessed, "I killed a man for wounding me, even a young man for injuring [56] me."¹⁶ So long as the holy race continued in itself to be unmixed with that which was inferior, and while the uncontaminated beauty and radiant purity of godly piety were still theirs, they were to be commended. But when they fell into the love of the flesh, they were drawn away by the beauty of women into a state of rebellion,¹⁷ for it says that they took wives from

14. The names of Aquila and Symmachus are associated with alternative Greek translations of the OT to that of the LXX. Both versions appeared during the second century of the Christian era.

15. Or "stock."

16. Gn 4.23.

17. Or "apostasy."

all that they chose of the daughters of men, that is, from the daughters of Cain. Though they were called gods, sons of gods, and sons of the mighty, they were then carried away to practice the habits of those others, being led into a shameful and profane conduct and lifestyle.

Furthermore, these women gave birth to extraordinary offspring. God in fact brought about a degradation in the beauty of their human bodies because of the women's lack of self-control in their appetite for loose sexual relations. So those who were born to them were *giants*, that is to say, men who were savage and of great strength, afflicted with an extremely ugly appearance and possessing bodies of greater size than others.

One should be aware that it is the custom of the language of inspired Scripture to call those who are extremely powerful "giants." So with regard to the Persians and Medes, for instance, it says through the mouth of the prophets, "Giants are coming to fulfill my wrath, rejoicing together and acting derisively."¹⁸

We will certainly not, however, give heed to the false accounts of the Greeks. For the chief men among them, especially the poets, according to what seemed good to them, were wont to make assertions and invent things about the kind of deeds the giants performed. They liked to make much of insignificant things and matters of no consequence, and by many false myths they thought they could make them great, as if the longer the tale the more appropriate it was. One claims that the whole of Sicily was thrown up into the sky by one of the giants, while another tells yet greater and more incongruous lies about some other giant.

So, as I was saying, the giants were fearful to behold, enormously strong, cruel and foreboding. With bodies of excessive stature, they were undoubtedly taller than other men, though not touching the clouds themselves, as those in the habit of inventing myths about them would claim.

3. So then, once the different races of men had become mixed with one another and all had become inclined towards unrestrained sin, it says, *The Lord God saw that the wickedness of men had increased upon the earth, and that everyone was intently contemplating evil in his heart all the time. God was greatly concerned* (or according to

18. Is 13.3 LXX.

another rendering, that of Aquila, *regretted*) *that he had made man upon the earth. He deliberated and said, "I will blot out man whom I have made from the face of the earth, both man and creatures, from the reptiles to the birds of the sky, because I am grieved that I made them."* But Noah found favor before the Lord God.¹⁹

Note that God determined to blot out every human being. But since Noah was adorned with a devout character, he had regard for him alone and would not destroy him with the rest, but would save all his family. And so God said to him, *"The end of all humankind has come before me, because the earth is filled with their iniquity. Now behold, I am going to destroy them, and the earth. Therefore, make for yourself an ark out of square timber; make the ark with compartments, and coat it with pitch inside and out. And you shall make the ark like this [57]: the length of the ark will be three hundred cubits, the width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. You shall assemble the ark when you make it, and you shall complete it to a cubit at the top."*²⁰

After other things it further says, *"You shall enter the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you, and also from all the wild animals, from all the cattle, and from every kind of flesh, two of each kind you shall bring into the ark so that you may preserve them with yourself. There shall be a male and a female from all of the birds according to their kind, and from all the cattle according to their kind, and from all the reptiles that creep upon the earth according to their kind. Two of each, a male and a female, shall come in to you to be preserved with you. From the clean animals you shall gather seven pairs,²¹ but one pair from the unclean."*²²

Subsequently, as the God of all decreed that all these things should come to pass, so all flesh drowned. The rains and hail under the entire heavens, the fury of the waters from the sky above, came flooding down. But the ark floated, with the souls of the righteous as its cargo.

19. Gn 6.5–8.

20. Gn 6.13–16. In the final sentence of the citation, the LXX, which Cyril reproduces here, makes little sense. The meaning of the Hebrew seems to be something like: "You shall make a window for the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit from the top." This would appear to mean that there was the gap of a cubit all the way around immediately below the roof.

21. Or "seven of each."

22. Gn 6.18–20; 7.2.

After a short while, however, the waters began to abate. It says, *The ark came to rest upon the Ararat mountains. Then Noah opened the door of the ark, and he sent out a raven to see if the water had receded from the face of the earth, but it did not return. After that he released a dove, and not finding any resting place for its feet, the dove returned to him in the ark, for the water was still over all the surface of the earth. So Noah stretched out his hand and took it, and brought it back to himself in the ark. Then after seven days he sent it out a second time, and it came back in the evening with a twig of an olive tree in its mouth. After another seven days he sent it out a third time, and it did not return to him again. Thus Noah then knew that all the water had subsided from the earth.*²³ So the dry land appeared again, and everything upon it. When Noah, with his children and all those gathered together, saw that the earth was now rid of the waters, he straight away built an altar and promptly offered the clean and undefiled cattle and birds as burnt offerings. These, I believe, he dedicated as thank offerings to the God who had preserved them. When this took place, *The Lord God*, it says, *smelt the pleasing aroma. Then the Lord God took thought and said, "Never again will I curse the earth because of the deeds of men, for the mind of man is thoroughly inclined towards evil things from his youth. Therefore, I will not smite all living flesh again, as I have done. All the days of the earth, seed and harvest, cold and heat, summer and spring, day and night, shall not cease."*²⁴

It further says, *The Lord God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, "Increase and multiply, and fill the earth, and have dominion over it. And the fear and dread of you will be upon all the wild animals of the earth, upon all the cattle, upon all the birds of the sky, upon all that moves upon the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; I have placed them under your authority."*²⁵ [60]

4. The discussion has now brought us to this point, and viewing it as a narrative according to the letter and in its literal sense, nothing at all, it seems to me, has been left out. So let us now go over the things that have been said to bring out the hidden, inner, spiritual meaning, and let us trace out the mystery of Christ

23. Cf. Gn 8.4, 6–12. Here Cyril does not closely follow the LXX text but is quite paraphrastic, even to the extent of changing the order of some clauses.

24. Gn 8.21–22.

25. Gn 9.1–2.

and present Noah himself and the ingenious and mysterious²⁶ arrangement relating to the ark as a picture of the salvation that comes through Christ.

Now Noah was born to Lamech, not the one who had previously murdered a man and a youth, but the one with the same name in the line of Seth. So too our Lord Jesus Christ sprang up out of Israel, which was holy on account of the fathers, and yet he was of a people who were of the same kind as Lamech and of the same mind as a murderer, who shared the same name as the murderer. So in a certain place it is said to the Jews,²⁷ "Which of the prophets did your fathers not kill?"²⁸ And they are told by Christ, "Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers."²⁹ Again, through the mouth of Isaiah he says, "When you stretch out your hands to me, I will turn my eyes away from you; and if you offer many prayers, I will not listen to you; for your hands are full of blood."³⁰

Noah was also the eleventh from Adam. Christ likewise was born according to the flesh in the eleventh and final season, as it were, and commenced the present economy for us. You can learn the truth of this—for you should make every possible inquiry—by being persuaded from the sacred Scriptures. For the one who hired workers for the vineyard at the eleventh hour called out to certain men, those who were from the Gentiles, saying, "Why do you stand here idle the whole day?" And when they openly stated, "No one has hired us," for before the coming of our Savior no one had called the Gentiles to the knowledge of God, he kindly and compassionately said, "You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is fair I will give you."³¹

Furthermore, the law given through Moses decreed that the slaying of the lamb should be carried out "between the evenings,"³² that is, when the lamps were lit at eventide. Likewise,

26. *aporrêtos*, "ineffable," "inexpressible," "esoteric."

27. Var. add "by Christ."

28. Cf. Acts 7.52.

29. Mt 23.32.

30. Is 1.15.

31. Cf. Mt 20.6–7.

32. This phrase, taken from the Passover instructions in Lv 23.5, is rendered by several modern English translations as "twilight" (e.g., NRSV, NIV, NJB).

when the time had come, as it were, for the sun to set, through the age that was then present being in effect shortened, the Only-Begotten Word of God became a man and endured being slain for all, freeing them from any penalty or punishment, removing those who believe far from all such fear. For he himself is the true Noah, that is, righteousness and rest, for that is what the name means.³³ For according to the Scriptures, we have been justified, not by works of righteousness that we ourselves have done, but according to his great mercy.³⁴ So now for us who believe, Christ has become our righteousness, and in truth our rest also.³⁵ For “he was bruised because of our iniquities, and was delivered up on account of our sins; and by his wounds we are healed,” and also, “the Lord delivered him up for our sins,” as the prophet says.³⁶

So since Christ has suffered in the flesh for us, we are blessed and esteemed. [61] And why is that? Have we not been called to such things as this? Do we not delight in heavenly gifts, and are we not made rich through participation in these things? And casting off the grievous burden of sin, do we not enjoy spiritual well-being? For he himself called us to this very thing when he said, “Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you shall find rest for your souls.”³⁷ That Christ would give us rest, the³⁸ archangel Gabriel also declared to the holy Virgin, when he said, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and you will bear a son. You will call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”³⁹ The divine prophets also eagerly foreannounced the rest that would come through him. One of them said, “Take courage, O Zion! Do not let your hands hang limp. The Lord your God is among you, the Mighty One will save you, and he will refresh you in his

33. Hebrew: *nōaḥ*, “rest.”

34. Cf. Ti 3.5.

35. Or “and our rest also. For in truth ...”

36. Is 53.5–6.

37. Mt 11.28–29.

38. Var. add “blessed.”

39. Lk 1.30–31; Mt 1.21.

love.”⁴⁰ Similarly, Isaiah saw this, as it were, in a revelation and said, “Be strong, you weak hands and feeble knees. Comfort one another, you fainthearted; be strong, do not fear. Behold, our God! Behold, the Lord is coming with strength, and his arm with authority. Like a shepherd he will tend his flock; he will gather the lambs into his arms, and comfort those with young.”⁴¹

Christ, then, has become our righteousness and rest, and has also saved us from the earth which the Lord God cursed. For this is what Lamech was saying when he prophesied to us in regard to Noah.⁴² And there is no doubt that the charges brought against the transgression committed in Adam have been remitted in Christ. For he became a curse for us, as it is written,⁴³ so delivering the earth from the ancient curse. For we say that through him God the Father restores all things⁴⁴ to their pristine state. “The old things have passed away, but all things have become new,” and “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.”⁴⁵

Seeing that Christ is the second Adam, through his obedience he overturns the accusation against the first-formed man, by which I mean he brings about the pardon of the disobedience that occurred in the beginning. This is also what the divine Paul thought about the matter, since he wrote, “For as through the one man’s disobedience many⁴⁶ were made sinners, so also through the one man’s obedience many will be made righteous.”⁴⁷ Christ was obedient to the Father to the point of death, the death on the cross.⁴⁸ So, as at the beginning the earth was put under a curse on account of the transgression committed in Adam, so it has been blessed on account of the obedience of Christ. Besides this, he has also redeemed us from the earth that was under a curse. For

40. Zep 3.16–17.

41. Is 35.3–4; 40.10–11.

42. Gn 5.29.

43. Cf. Gal 3.13.

44. *anakephalaioushai*, “recapitulate, bring under one head”; cf. Eph 1.10.

45. 2 Cor 5.17.

46. The quantitative “many,” which appears in the Harleian Codex, has been included. It is, of course, found in the text of Romans that Cyril is here citing.

47. Rom 5.19.

48. Cf. Phil 2.8.

we await new heavens and a new earth, according to his promises, just as the wise disciple of the Savior said.⁴⁹ So Christ made anew for us the way back into heaven above, [64] and he also entered as a forerunner on our behalf into the holy land,⁵⁰ which he said would be the inheritance of the meek,⁵¹ that is, those who are instructed in the gospel teachings that lead to meekness. The law did indeed command those who had done wrong to be inflicted in return with the loss of “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and a wound for a wound,”⁵² yet Christ says to us, “To him who strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.”⁵³

So then, Noah was the eleventh from Adam through the line of Seth and Enosh, who hoped to be called by the name of the Lord his God on account of his devout behavior and love of God. Likewise, the holy evangelists record the lineage of our Lord Jesus Christ from Adam, and the account of the genealogy goes all the way up to Joseph himself, who was, one might say, a holy man.

5. We may say that the spread of the races into one another was like a mixed mass, a mass that was made up of the holy and that which was not so, namely the profane and abominable. For in the same manner in which those descended from Enosh, who bore the name of God, went madly after the daughters of men, and were of a very different character than he was, choosing to live according to the customs and laws of those men, so as to become afflicted with every extreme kind of corruption, so the same also happened to those descended from the race⁵⁴ of Israel. For while they were practicing a holy manner of life, and were noble imitators of the piety of their forefathers, shunning every kind of evil, and being in themselves wholly undefiled, they retained the glory of their commendable⁵⁵ behavior. But when they became entangled with the neighboring nations, even though the law spoke against it, they were easily seduced

49. 2 Pt 3.13.

50. Or “earth.”

51. Cf. Mt 5.5.

52. Ex 21.24–25; Lv 24.20; Dt 19.21.

53. Mt 5.39; Lk 6.29.

54. Lit. “blood.”

55. Var. add “and well-ordered.”

and readily made unstable, and they soon became infected with the abominable behavior that was found among them. Indeed, by which of the most extreme forms of evil were they not infected and overcome?

Now this is most incredible. The nations, as they had come to serve the creature rather than the Creator and Maker, and had turned away to the error of polytheism besides, paid homage to the hordes of demons; and Israel, which was originally holy through its forefathers, reckoned total apostasy to be of little account. As a result, God said to them through a holy oracle, "Go to the isles of the Kittim and see; send to Kedar and take careful note, and see if such things have happened, whether nations will change their gods, though they are not gods. Yet my people have changed their glory for that which will not profit. Heaven is astonished at this, and the earth trembles exceedingly, says the Lord. For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fount of living water, and they have hewn for themselves broken cisterns, which will not be able to hold water."⁵⁶ And again, "According to the number of your cities were your gods, O Judah; and according to the number of your streets, O Jerusalem, they sacrificed to Baal. Why will you speak to me? You have all become lawless, and you have all behaved in a godless way towards me, says the Lord."⁵⁷

They fell into such perverse reasoning, and even more perverse deeds, since they were at that time having intercourse with erring women. When children were born, even though they were immediately marked with the sign of the Jewish ministration⁵⁸ [65], namely circumcision on the eighth day with the accompanying sacrifices, they were handed over to unclean demons as devoted offerings from a consecrated people. And this, I believe, is the meaning of what was spoken through the mouth of the prophet regarding these matters, "for strange children were born to them."⁵⁹

Consequently, since the holy race had become corrupt through

56. Jer 2.10-13.

57. Cf. Jer 2.28; 11.13.

58. *latreia*, "worship," "service," "cultus," "ministration."

59. Hos 5.7.

their union with those who were inferior, as far as their character and their different disposition and customs are concerned, and since too the nations⁶⁰ had joined themselves to the one nation of Israel, the Maker of all justly pronounced the destruction of all the nations that were upon the earth. But being overcome by his innate goodness, he did not vent his wrath in equal proportion to their sins. That the race of men upon earth should not perish entirely, by means of Noah he foreshowed the justification that was by faith and the deliverance through water.

So, as it is written, the Only-Begotten became a man and lived among men, he being the true Noah. Furthermore, corresponding figuratively to that famed ark of ancient times, he constructed, as it were, the church, into which those rush who flee the destruction stored up for the world. Thus the divine Paul interpreted the mystery regarding the ark, saying, "By faith Noah, having been warned, prepared an ark for the salvation of his household,"⁶¹ "in which," as Peter also says, "a few people, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. And baptism, which is prefigured by this,"⁶² now saves us—not as the removal of dirt from the body, but as the appeal of a good conscience towards God."⁶³

Now then, in what manner was the ark constructed? "*You shall make the length of the ark,*" it says, "*three hundred cubits, the width fifty, and the height thirty. You shall assemble the ark when you make it, and you shall complete it to a cubit at the top.*" That this construction signified the mystery of Christ, albeit very dimly, should be completely and utterly obvious, since when the divine Paul wrote to those justified by faith, he said how unceasingly he prayed for them, "that they may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, and the length, and the height, and the depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge."⁶⁴

60. Here reading "nations" (*ethnôn*) with the Harleian manuscript, rather than "customs" (*ethôn*).

61. Heb 11.7.

62. Or "which is the antitype of this."

63. 1 Pt 3.20–21.

64. Eph 3.18–19.

6. What, then, is the significance of the measurements of the ark? It is a true and proper indication of the holy and consubstantial Trinity, the one Deity who possesses perfection, indeed total perfection in absolutely everything. For when we give the matter our consideration, it is this that one might see hinted at in the numbers in question. As is customarily found in the inspired Scripture, those numbers which circle back on themselves constitute symbols of perfection.⁶⁵ What I mean is something such as this: a week begins with the first day and ends with a Sabbath on the seventh day, and then we count the sequence again beginning from the first up to the seventh. Similarly, when we come to the number ten, we once more begin with the first and continue until the tenth, and then the same thing happens again. The most perfect number of all, [68] namely one hundred, is the sum of ten times ten, at which point the cycle returns to a single unit again.

So what I am saying is that in the divine Scripture every number that goes back, as it were, once it has reached an end is a purposely designed and fitting symbol of perfection. See then how the perfection of the holy Trinity lies, after this fashion, in the three hundred cubits, which is the length of the ark.⁶⁶ And the fact that the Deity, who though being single⁶⁷ is a perfection of perfections, if we may put it thus, is especially well indicated by the width, which comes to fifty cubits, that is, seven times seven with a single unit added on account of the fact that the Deity is one being.⁶⁸ And then the height bears for us no other sense than this same, for while the height comes to completion in three decads of cubits, yet situated at the top was one single cubit that finished it off. For it says, "*its height will be thirty cubits, and you shall complete it to a cubit.*"⁶⁹ For while the holy Trinity opens out, as it were, into three distinct subsistences, or separate Persons, it is as though it contracts into the one nature of Deity.

65. In what follows, the words "perfection" and "perfect" also bear the sense of "completion" and "complete."

66. Since 300 is three times the most perfect number, 100, as just described.

67. Or "though existing in a monad [*monas*]."

68. Or "the fact that the Deity has one nature [*phusin*]."

69. That is, a cubit from the top.

Whereas the Greeks erroneously follow the polytheistic way of worship, when we consider the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, though we do truly assign them their own distinct subsistences, it is our habit to adorn them with a unity of nature. It is as though by means of this identity of essence we were raising up together⁷⁰ the length, the width, and the height by that one cubit, so completing the ark.

So then, Christ preserves us by faith, and it is as though he brings the church to abide in the ark, in which we will sail over the fear of death and escape being condemned along with the world, for the righteous Noah, that is, Christ, will be with us.

7. I think it worthwhile to investigate in detail what interpretation might be given for those who flee with Noah into the ark, who enjoy the salvation that comes through faith and water. It is written that *Noah went into the ark, with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives*.⁷¹ Noah also took in with them some of every kind of animal and bird, seven pairs of those that were clean, and one pair of the unclean,⁷² for God saw fit to issue a law regarding this matter. The names of Noah's sons were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. The meaning of Shem is "plant" or "perfection," Ham means "heat," and Japheth "widening."⁷³

Now we have been saved in Christ through faith, having been brought out from the ineffectual manner of life according to the law into the perfection of the gospel teaching, having been bred,⁷⁴ as it were, like delicate young calves. The divine David therefore rebuked those of the Jewish people who did not accept the justification that is in Christ, and said, "You have loved wickedness more than goodness, unrighteousness more than speaking righteousness. You have loved all destructive words, and a deceitful tongue."⁷⁵ For they spoke ill of the Son without

70. Var. "we were closely connecting."

71. Gn 7:7.

72. Cf. Gn 7:8–9. As previously, rather than "seven pairs," the original intention may have been "seven of each." See n. 21 above.

73. On the meanings of the names, see p. 82 above. In the paragraphs that now follow, Cyril unpacks the meaning of each of the three names in turn.

74. *pephuteumenoι*, "engendered," "planted." Here it would seem that Cyril is playing on the supposed meaning of the name Shem, *phuteuma*, "plant."

75. Ps 52:3–4 (51:5–6 LXX).

restraint. "For this reason," it says, "God will destroy you for ever; may he pluck you up and remove you from your dwelling and your root from the land of the living."⁷⁶ But with regard to those who love the [6g] justification and life that is in Christ, it says, "Those who are planted in the house of the Lord will flourish in the courts of our God."⁷⁷

That Emmanuel wrought his grace in us, which is equivalent to a divine and spiritual fire, being like heat imparted through the Spirit, the divine Paul affirms, wishing those called in holiness to prove themselves "fervent in spirit."⁷⁸ The wise John also informs us of precisely this when he says, "I baptize you in water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is more powerful than I, he whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire."⁷⁹ For the love of the Jews grew cold because lawlessness abounded among them, as it is written.⁸⁰ We ourselves, however, are extremely hot in this respect. Therefore, we say, "What shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or persecution, or nakedness, or danger, or the sword?"⁸¹ Ham then, who is to be taken as meaning "heat," is an especially clear figure of those who are fervent in spirit.

That we, coming out of a straitened⁸² life under the law, have been brought to an enlargement of heart, is suggested to us by the third son, Japheth, who bears a name meaning "widening."⁸³ For God declares to the Jews through the mouth of Isaiah, "Hear the word of the Lord, you straitened men, and you rulers of the people who are in Jerusalem."⁸⁴ And again, "Learn to hear, you

76. Ps 52.5 (51.7 LXX).

77. Ps 92.13 (91.14 LXX).

78. Rom 12.11. The verb *zeontas* includes the component of heat, thus "boiling," "seething."

79. Mt 3.11.

80. Cf. Mt 24.12.

81. Rom 8.35.

82. The Greek words rendered "straitened" in this paragraph also contain the idea of "narrowness," being the opposite of course to the meaning of "Japheth," the name presently under consideration.

83. Which might also be rendered as "enlarging" or "extending."

84. Is 28.14.

who are straitened.”⁸⁵ So Paul, having come out from the narrow confines of the law, declared to certain of those who now believed, saying, “Our mouth has spoken openly to you, O Corinthians; our heart is wide open. You are not straitened by us, but you are straitened in your own affections. Now in return (I speak as to children), open wide your hearts also. Do not be yoked together with unbelievers.”⁸⁶ For these were still following the commandments of the Jews and foolish and ill-conceived opinions. David too, as though assuming the role⁸⁷ of the new people of God in Christ, in a certain passage sings with regard to Christ the Savior of all: “I ran the way of your commandments, when you enlarged my heart.”⁸⁸ For our mind was enlarged through wisdom when Emmanuel made his dwelling and habitation in the souls of all through the Spirit. These are they who are in Christ through faith.

8. That those who are justified by faith form the larger and purest multitude, and the Jews the lesser, one might readily learn here. For Noah brought seven⁸⁹ of the clean animals into the ark, but two of the unclean, that is, of the Jews who murdered the Lord. A remnant of them has in fact been saved, in accordance with the words of the prophet.⁹⁰ That some of the race of Israel, however, would later turn away and abandon the faith, is also here outlined. For it says, *he sent out a raven from the ark to see if the water had receded, but it did not return*. I suppose it was drowned in the waters, as it could not find any place to stop. Consequently, [72] to fall away from faith in Christ results in being completely lost.⁹¹ So also to those who after coming to faith desired to be made perfect by the law, that is, those who thought they could so become perfect, the blessed Paul says, “You have been severed from Christ, you who seek to be justified by the

85. Is 28.19-20.

86. 2 Cor 6.11-14.

87. *prosôpon*, literally “person,” “face.” Here is meant the more technical sense of “persona,” “character.”

88. Ps 119.32 (118.32 LXX).

89. See nn. 21 and 72 above.

90. Cf. Is 10.22.

91. Var. add “and in death.”

law; you have fallen from grace. For through the Spirit, by faith, we eagerly await the hope of righteousness.”⁹²

Note how among the unclean birds the raven is one that is uncontrollable. For after justification in Christ had come, some of the Jews went back to the shadows of the law. And it is concerning these, I would think, that the wise John writes, “They went out from us, but they were not of us. For if they were of us, they would have remained with us.”⁹³ Now the Spirit plainly states, “In later times some will fall away from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits.”⁹⁴ See how there is a clear figure of this also in what Noah did. For he sent out the first and second doves to view the earth, to see if the flood had subsided. But the doves settled into their nests in the ark, and one of them had⁹⁵ a twig in its mouth, a small branch from an olive tree, as it is written.⁹⁶ For the saints are sent by Christ to survey the world and those in it, yet they settle down, as it were, and speak peace. It is this, I believe, that is suggested by the branch of the olive tree placed crosswise in the mouth of the dove. For this tree is always a symbol of peace.

Now those lovers of God, who have been purified by faith and by the gentleness of the gospel way of life, are God’s chosen ones. The type, however, indicates that in later times some of them will fall away, as I was just saying. For the third and final dove was sent out and had no thought of returning, since it stayed away. Then when the flood subsided, the ark came to rest upon the mountains of Ararat, the meaning of which is “witness of descent.”⁹⁷ For in a way those in Christ through faith are as though they were high in the mountains on account of the exaltedness of their gospel way of life, and they proclaim to people everywhere God the Word, who descended from heaven above.

92. Gal 5.4–5.

93. 1 Jn 2.19.

94. 1 Tm 4.1.

95. Var. “held.”

96. Cf. Gn 8.11.

97. This proposed meaning for Ararat is extremely doubtful. The latter part does bear some resemblance to the Hebrew verb *yārad*, “go down,” “descend,” but even this is far from precise. The Greek noun *katabasis*, “descent,” is frequently used by the Church Fathers in incarnational contexts.

To them God himself declared through the prophet, “Be my witnesses, and I too am a witness, says the Lord God, and my servant whom I have chosen.”⁹⁸ So then, the glory of those who are in Christ is higher than the low estate of the world.

9. Now, that Emmanuel has become a high priest for us, through whom also we have gained access to God the Father, and that we have been restored to our original state, having been set free from the curse, namely that placed upon the first-formed man, one can observe in those things that are written next.

For when the earth had dried up, it says that Noah and all those with him came out of the ark.⁹⁹ And then *he built an altar to God, and took some of every clean animal and every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And God smelled the pleasing aroma; and the Lord God considered this and said, “I will never again curse the [73] earth because of men’s deeds.”*¹⁰⁰ And later it says, *The Lord God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, “Increase and multiply, and fill the earth, and rule over it. And the fear and the dread of you will be upon all the wild animals, upon all the cattle of the earth, upon all the birds of the sky, upon all that moves upon the earth, and upon all the fish of the sea. I have placed them under your authority.”*¹⁰¹

So then, when Christ became our high priest, and through him we were offered spiritually as a pleasing aroma to God the Father, we were then counted worthy of his abundant favor, and we have a sure foundation, that death would no longer have power over us. Also, that wrathful condition, even that which stems from the ancient curse, has been dissolved. For we have been blessed in Christ, through whom and with whom be glory to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

Concerning Noah’s nakedness and Ham

1. Everything relating to the ark has been concluded, the flood is past, and Noah has now undertaken to till the ground.

98. Is 43.10.

99. Cf. Gn 8.19.

100. Gn 8.20–21.

101. Gn 9.1–2.

So we will next inquire into those things in the account that were done by Ham.

This passage urges those who would wish to live uprightly to count absolutely nothing as equal to having respect for one's parents, and distinctly to refrain, as something most perilous, from mocking them in any way whatsoever, even though it may be that they are carried away from proper conduct for a brief while by the weaknesses of their human nature.

That it is always necessary to be respectful to one's parents, the divine law itself also teaches us. For having previously commanded that one ought to love the one Being of God with the whole heart and soul, it says, "Honor your father and your mother, in order that it may go well with you, and you shall live long upon the earth."¹⁰² Those who give us birth should be reckoned as though they were an image and representation of God, for it says, "Remember that it was through them that you were given birth."¹⁰³ Again it says, "The eye that mocks a father and dishonors the old age of a mother, let the ravens of the valleys peck it out."¹⁰⁴ Consequently, not to hold that one should honor one's parents and count them worthy of all respect results in a curse or a punishment, as one may readily learn through Ham.

The sons of Noah, it says, who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Ham was the father of Canaan. These are the three sons of Noah. From these, people were scattered over the whole earth. Now Noah became a farmer and planted a vineyard. Then he drank some of the wine and became intoxicated and was naked in his home. And Ham the father of Canaan saw the nakedness of his father, and going out he told his brothers outside. Shem and Japheth took a garment, placed it upon their two shoulders and, walking backwards, covered their father's nakedness. Their faces were turned away, so [76] they did not see the nakedness of their father. When Noah became sober from the wine and learned what his younger son had done to him, he said, "Cursed be Canaan, he shall be a servant to his brothers." And he said, "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant. May God enlarge

102. Ex 20.12; Dt 5.16. Cyril is incorrect when he claims that the command to love God was given previously. This in fact comes later in Dt 6.5.

103. Sir 7.28.

104. Prv 30.17.

*Japheth, and may he dwell in the tents of Shem; and let Canaan be his*¹⁰⁵
*servant.*¹⁰⁶

Now having planted a vineyard, and having labored much, Noah then drank more wine than was his custom. And so while he surprisingly fell under the charge of being a winebibber, suffering the unacceptable act of exposing himself, he remained unseen by most in the home. Yet the one who was unstable in mind, namely Ham, took occasion from the improper sight to engage in profane mockery. Though he might have covered him over, he did not in fact assist his father, who was overcome by drunkenness and led into committing a grave error through the wine. But, neglecting to do this, and showing little of the honor due to the one who had begotten him, Ham hastened to invite others to view the sight, and sought to subject the old man in his tent to the ridicule of his brothers. They, however, were above heeding such evil counsel. Rather, disapproving of what had occurred and wanting to cover the unseemly sight with garments, they walked in backwards. For they considered it a matter of piety not to feel shame at their father's private parts,¹⁰⁷ through which they had been begotten.

When the father woke up and learned of what had happened, he immediately cursed the one who without reason had taken no care to act properly and show him respect, and he justly placed a yoke of servitude upon Ham. In so doing, however, he uttered the name of Canaan, since the Canaanites, who would also share in his punishment, were descended from Ham, for the whole race was to be punished. But those who showed him honor he blessed.

2. Once again here in a figurative manner the mystery relating to the Jews is indicated. For the total number of peoples was three. There was that people which was there in the first instance, like Shem, then that which came in the middle, corresponding to the accursed Ham, and the third and final people, which is to be understood as Japheth coming at the end, whose name means "widening."

105. Var. "their."

106. Gn 9.18–27.

107. Lit. "thigh," a euphemism for the nearby genitals.

Now God the Father revealed his own Son to us, who is signified by the private parts of Noah, which is to say that besides the spiritual beauty of the Godhead he also related to what was shameful and unattractive on account of his being human, for "he had no form, nor comeliness," as the prophet said.¹⁰⁸ Then at that time, as the outcome of the events also bears witness, both the first and the last people, that is, those who were the first believers in the beginning, as well as those called in later times, treated Emmanuel with reverence, and so through him they were blessed by God the Father. But that people which came in the middle of the two, having mocked Christ for the uncomeliness of his human nature, and having greatly dishonored the Son who came forth¹⁰⁹ from God, remained in a state of bondage, having fallen away from the liberty of their forefathers.

That those among the Jews who came to believe in later times would be the first partakers and fellow residents, since they were brought together into a single city, or dwelling or home, which is the church, Noah indicated when he said, "*May God enlarge Japheth*," that is [77], the third and final people, for Japheth was the third son, "*and may he dwell in the tents of Shem*," that is, of the first son. "*And let Canaan be their servant*." This, I believe, is what Christ said to the people of the Jews: "Truly, truly, I say to you, that every one who commits sin is a slave of sin. The slave does not remain in the house for ever; the son does remain for ever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free."¹¹⁰ For the wretched Jews, who mocked the Incarnation¹¹¹ of our Savior and failed to honor the revelation of him, the revelation given to us from God the Father, have remained in a spirit of bondage.

108. Is 53.2.

109. Or "shone forth."

110. Jn 8.34-36. Cyril has omitted the adverb *ontôs*, "really," "indeed," from the final clause.

111. Lit. "economy."

Concerning the Tower and its Construction

Now nothing in human nature remained that was in a good or healthy state. For the Maker of all things had made it to be completely full of all manner of good. Yet that nature which had previously been great, which not long before had exceeding attractiveness, was now diminishing bit by bit, losing those things by means of which it reasonably ought to have appeared noble. It is as if to say that incorruption had been frittered away in Adam, for it was said to him, "Earth you are, and to the earth you shall return."¹¹² So after this he was deprived of the Spirit. For when God saw that those upon the earth wished only to give their minds to profanities of the flesh and to the foulest passions, he said, "*My Spirit shall certainly not remain among these men, because they are flesh.*"¹¹³

Yet see what other matter awaits. Due to their impious scheming and senseless, rash actions, certain people were condemned and were caused to speak strange and discordant languages. For it says, *All the earth was of one language, and there was one speech for them all. And it happened that as they migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Sinar and they settled there. Then they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and bake them with fire." They had brick for stone and bitumen for mortar. And they said, "Come, let us build for ourselves a city and a tower; whose top will reach up to heaven, and let us make a name for ourselves before we are scattered over all the earth.*"¹¹⁴ Then God came down, for that is what the sacred Scripture says, and he confused their languages and also scattered them throughout all the earth.

While the God of all reproved their endeavors, he did not do so out of fear that they might complete their work. Rather, because they were planning something excessive, in his innate kindness, he brought their undertaking to an eventual end by making them speak many languages. In doing so he is showing that in his oversight of humankind, if they get carried away

112. Gn 3.19.

113. Gn 6.3. Cyril omits the temporal phrase *eis ton aiôna*, "for ever," which accompanies the verb "remain."

114. Gn 11.1–4.

somewhat by absurd undertakings, he does not let them go un-reproved.

God confused their very languages, for the things that ought to be done only through the ability and authority of the Maker are not appropriate for any other to do, except for him alone. So the transformation of speech, and the increasing of the difference in the sound of words, one might justly and truly attribute to the One who alone is by nature the Maker.

Now what happened surely ought not to escape a great deal of ridicule, and fittingly so [80]. For those people supposed, though they did not know how, that they were entirely capable of building a tower out of brick and mud that would reach up even to heaven itself. So they serve as another figure, I believe, of the stupidity of the Jews, who supposed they could make for themselves a relationship with God.¹¹⁵ In effect, they thought that the way up to heaven was not through choosing to do those things pleasing to God and esteemed by him, nor was it through faith in Christ, but by raising up some sort of tower, foolishly thinking that solely by the bare repute of their forefathers they could attain the highest things. For as they were constantly citing the name of Abraham, and by such earthly repute were building up, as it were, their own glory, they have ever stood condemned.

Yet God reproved those who planned to build the tower, and divided them into speakers of many languages. And we may say that in a certain way what then befell them was a declaration in advance of the things that happened to the Jews. For since they had minds set upon greatly exalted matters, through which things they were seeking the way to heaven above, he scattered them among those of many different languages, that is, among all the nations. For, being driven out of their homes, they were dispersed from their own lands and cities, and became "wanderers among the nations," as the prophet said.¹¹⁶

In Christ, however, the speaking of many languages was a good sign. For on the day of Pentecost, when the disciples were gathered together in one house, "suddenly there came," it says, "a sound from heaven, like the rushing of a violent wind, and

115. Or "establish for themselves a connection with God."

116. Hos 9.17.

it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them what looked like tongues of fire that distributed themselves and settled upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”¹¹⁷ And what was it they were speaking? The Spirit was conveying the way upwards, the ascension into heaven through faith in Christ, in every language spoken upon the earth, by peoples and nations united into one gathering in the Spirit.¹¹⁸ For every tongue among the people was confessing Christ and speaking of his mysteries.

So then, in connection with the tower the speaking in many languages was a sign of the scattering and the expulsion into all the nations. But in connection with Christ it was a sign of the gathering together into the unity of the Spirit and of the way up to heaven. For Christ has become our “strong tower,” as the psalmist says,¹¹⁹ which conveys us up to the heavenly city, and unites those upon the earth with the choirs of holy angels.

Concerning Abraham and Melchizedek

1. The God of all gave a law as an aid, for that is what is written.¹²⁰ That the law provides instruction¹²¹ for children, however, while the mystery of Christ leads to maturity,¹²² is not at all difficult for us to see from the sacred Scriptures, especially as we acquire a sure understanding and gather true teachings. Here, I believe, the divine Paul gives a sufficient explanation¹²³ regarding the two covenants when he says, “There is, on the one hand, an annulment of the former ordinance because of its weakness and ineffectiveness, for the law made nothing perfect; and on the other hand, the introduction of a better [81] hope, through

117. Acts 2.2–4.

118. Or “by the Spirit.”

119. Ps 61.3 (60.4 LXX).

120. Cyril possibly has in mind Gal 3.24 (“the law was our instructor [*paidagōgos*] until Christ came”).

121. Or “discipline.”

122. Or “perfection.”

123. Or “delivers an oracle.”

which we draw near to God."¹²⁴ So one may indeed enter into a relationship with God extremely easily, not through the earlier Mosaic ordinance, but through the introduction of the hope that is here spoken of, which the interpreter of mysteries,¹²⁵ in considering the matter according to the truth, has it in mind to reckon as being the greater.

Paul plainly says that the matters contained in the law were to be annulled, and pronouncing the ordinance that came first to be unable to make anything perfect, he writes to the Hebrews, "For if the first covenant had been without fault, no occasion would have been sought for a second one. For he finds fault with it,¹²⁶ and says, 'Behold the days are coming, says the Lord, and I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, for they did not keep to my covenant, so I rejected them, says the Lord. For this will be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their minds, and I will write them upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they will be my people. And each man will no more teach his fellow, and each one his brother, saying, "Know the Lord," because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, for I will be merciful towards their sins, and I will not remember their lawlessness any more.'"¹²⁷ He then immediately adds, "When he says 'new' covenant, he has made the first obsolete; and what is obsolete and growing old will soon disappear."¹²⁸

So then, the law is weak, and is also seen to have great impotence when it comes to being able to produce perfect sanctification. That justification in Christ and worship¹²⁹ in him are superior, however, you may hear God clearly proclaiming through the mouth of the prophets. To those who respected the minis-

¹²⁴. Heb 7.18-19.

¹²⁵. A designation for the author of Hebrews, which to Cyril's mind was Paul.

¹²⁶. Cyril departs from the more common reading "with *them*."

¹²⁷. Heb 8.7-12; Jer 31.31-34.

¹²⁸. Heb 8.13.

¹²⁹. See n. 58 above.

tration under the law, and for whom it was as if they were tightly bound to the ordinance that has become obsolete, he at one time says, “Wash yourselves, be clean,”¹³⁰ then at another time, “I desire mercy and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.”¹³¹ We have indeed received mercy in Christ, and in him we have come to behold the Father spiritually and we have come to know the Being of God.

2. There is a countless number of relevant matters that could be accumulated to add to those that have been said, and the words of the holy prophets could be further adduced by means of which one might most plainly see that the ministration according to the law is unacceptable to God. But so that we do not drag out the discussion of the issue before us, and so that our discourse does not go too far, as though proceeding along some other path, we shall now move on to the divine Abraham.

When Abraham learned that his nephew Lot had unexpectedly been put in danger because he had been living in Sodom and was now among those taken to be slaves as the spoils of war, he called to arms the servants born in his household as well as certain other men, Eshcol, Aner, and Mamre, who were allied to him. Then he led them out, though not in some degenerate manner, against those who had been victorious, and he delivered Lot from the wrongdoing of those men. And with him he also rescued a great multitude [84] of people who had suffered wrong and been endangered.

When Abraham was returning home, bearing the illustrious tokens of the great courage he had shown against the enemy, those who were indebted to his efforts were obliged to come and meet him. For this is what is written: *The king of Sodom went out to meet him in the valley of Shaveh (which was the plain of the king) after he returned from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him.* Then it adds: *And Melchizedek the king of Salem brought out to him bread and wine, and he was the priest of God Most High. Then he blessed Abraham and said, “Blessed be Abraham by God Most High, who created heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High, who has*

130. Is 1.16.

131. Hos 6.6.

*delivered your enemies into your hand." And Abraham gave him a tenth of everything.*¹³²

Observe, then, the types of the perfection in Christ that clearly shine forth in Melchizedek, and see also the inferior status of the ministration according to the law. There is absolutely no doubt that, as it is written, "the lesser is blessed by the greater."¹³³ Now the divine Abraham was the root, as it were, from which Israel came forth, and Levi, who in him was made preeminent and especially chosen to be appointed to the glories of the divine priesthood, was then still in his loins. For the blessed Abraham was the potential father of those who would later come forth from him. And this, I believe, is the meaning of that which was wisely spoken concerning Levi: "For he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him."¹³⁴ Therefore, the righteousness according to the law is blessed by the ministration that is in Christ, of which Melchizedek was a type.

So how could one doubt that this blessing is incomparably more excellent than that which lacks such an effect? We shall not, however, now spend more time contemplating such things in more detail.

3. Now he who wishes to contend with Christ will perhaps before all else want to inquire who this Melchizedek was. For certain people rave wildly in their different opinions about him, having foolishly fallen into meaningless nonsense, and giving little heed to the practices of the inspired Scripture. For there are those who say that it was specifically the Holy Spirit who took on a visible form like ours, and him alone who appeared to the victorious Abraham. But there are others who do not hold to this view, for they fear, I imagine, falling into excessive absurdity, and they assert that Melchizedek was a most special and eminent power among the multitude of angels.¹³⁵ So their weak and fool-

¹³². Gn 14.17–20.

¹³³. Heb 7.7.

¹³⁴. Heb 7.10.

¹³⁵. It is not clear specifically whom Cyril is attacking here. There was a third-century Christian sect called the Melchizedekians, who understood Melchizedek to be a divine figure superior to Christ, but not specifically that he was the Holy Spirit. Epiphanius of Salamis (d. 403) claims that Hieracas of Leontopolis, a third-century Egyptian ascetic, identified the Holy Spirit with

ish minds lead them into this opinion of the matter. For since, some say, Salem means “peace,” and Melchizedek is named the king of Salem, it should not be interpreted as a man, they say, but it is the Spirit that is signified. For in his own self the Spirit is the peace of God, and Melchizedek himself was the sole ruler of “peace.” To this they add that if “he had neither beginning of days nor end of life,”¹³⁶ how can it not be open to a charge of foolishness to attribute this state without beginning or end to a man? So once again, this should be taken as meaning the Spirit. Also, if it says [85], “being like the Son of the Most High,¹³⁷ he remains a priest for ever,”¹³⁸ how can we think at all of Melchizedek as being human? Then, latching other arguments on to these, they suppose they are upholding the truth with reasons procured from I do not know where.

Now it is necessary for us to speak what thoughts come to mind, wishing to give a good and truthful answer to the dubious opinions of these people. For firstly, if they knew how to think reasonably, they themselves would acknowledge that Salem is a city over which Melchizedek was not the first nor the only one to reign as king, but there were doubtless many who came before him, and also others after him. If anyone should think we are not speaking truly, let him come and prove that Melchizedek is reigning over Salem even now, and further that it is one of the present cities in Judea, perhaps that one which is now called by the name of Jerusalem, which means “vision of peace.”¹³⁹ Yet no one can prove this is so.

Melchizedek (*Panarion* 35.5.1–5; 67.3.1–5; 67.7.1–8). Interestingly, Jerome argues, in *Epistle* 73.1.1–2 and 73.2.1, that both Origen and Didymus also associate the Spirit with Melchizedek. While it is not clear whether Cyril read Epiphanius, we do know that Cyril was familiar with Jerome’s commentaries. Whether, however, he is reliant on either of these figures for this section against those who claim Melchizedek to be the Holy Spirit is unknown. The length of Cyril’s argument against this notion indicates its persistence, at least in Alexandria. (Thanks to Mark DelCogliano for allowing us to read an unpublished paper on the topic.)

¹³⁶. Heb 7.3.

¹³⁷. Var. add “God.”

¹³⁸. Heb 7.3.

¹³⁹. The name of Jerusalem would appear to contain the element of “peace,” but the remaining part remains obscure. Jerome likewise takes the

So then, to undertake to nullify those things which are obvious and widely accepted by giving heed to the meaning of names is something quite absurd. If we put our minds to it, we may see without any difficulty that the matter is foolish and that what they say about it abounds in stupidity. For Jerusalem means "vision of peace," as I just said, or "higher than death"; Israel is "a mind that sees God," while Judah means "praise" and "hymn-singing."¹⁴⁰ The sacred Scripture, however, clearly declares that those who were kings of Jerusalem ruling over Israel and Judah¹⁴¹ in later times were unholy and profane. So "vision of peace," and "praise" and "hymn-singing," and "a mind that sees God" do not pertain to such earthly kings. Nor would it be applicable to a human being if they should say, in attending to the meaning of names, that those who later reigned as kings were shadows and images, and not men at all, but that it rather meant the Spirit, just as also in the matter of Melchizedek.¹⁴²

One may learn from this that the import of names, that is, their meanings, in no way affects the actual nature of things. For should not one then think, or rather state it as being absolutely true, that if Jerusalem were a "vision of peace," Christ must be entirely overlooked? For "he himself is our peace," as the Scriptures say.¹⁴³ Yet it was not in visions of the mind that he was seen, through whom we have obtained access and are joined to the Father in the unity of the Spirit, who made the two into one, having created the two peoples into one new man.¹⁴⁴ How, then, is there a vision of peace unless one sees Christ? And if Jerusalem is "higher than death," that is to say, greater than and

meaning to be "vision of peace" (*Letter* 46.3 [PL 22.485]). Most commonly, however, the name is understood to mean "city of peace."

140. In Hebrew there does not in fact appear to be any connection between the name Jerusalem and "higher than death." Israel is variously understood as meaning "one who struggles with God," "a prince with God," or "let God contend." As regards the meaning of Judah, Cyril is correct.

141. That is, those places whose names were just explained.

142. Cyril here argues upon the assumption that the later kings of Jerusalem, from the way in which Scripture describes them, had to be nothing other than ordinary men.

143. Eph 2.14.

144. Cf. Eph 2.15, referring to the words that explain the "peace" of the previous verse.

above death, how is it that the wretched city utterly perished on account of their unbelief in Christ? For he himself declared to the Jews, “Truly I say to you, if you do not believe that I am he, you will die in your sins.”¹⁴⁵ And if Israel is understood to mean “a mind that sees God,” why did they not see the glory of Christ, through whom and in whom we know the Father himself? How could they have been overcome [88] by darkness? Or how was it said concerning those to whom it fell to lead others, “Leave them alone; they are blind guides of the blind”?¹⁴⁶ For what kind of blindness is it that may be interpreted as a mind that sees God?

It is therefore sheer folly to attribute wholly to qualities of actual things the significance of their names. So nothing at all prevents us, I believe, from rightly and properly supposing that Melchizedek was a man who at that time ruled as king in Salem, even though this name might perhaps be interpreted as indicating “peace.”

4. One ought to give further consideration to these matters being discussed, for here we may see the divine mysteries faintly as in a mirror or in a figure. While among those things that have been created we have nothing at all with which to compare the divine, ineffable Being, yet from so many thousands of illustrations¹⁴⁷ we are in some measure able to gather something that can be understood or said concerning him to the degree that this is attainable. The mystery concerning Christ nonetheless remains extremely obscure, and the matter¹⁴⁸ of his becoming human is not easily comprehended by ordinary people.

The subject of the divine economy is, for sure, exceedingly deep. For the Only-Begotten, being God and also of God according to his nature, became a man and dwelt among us. Further, he is called our apostle and high priest,¹⁴⁹ and he has delivered us from the dull speech¹⁵⁰ of the law and has brought us to the har-

145. Jn 8.24.

146. Mt 15.14.

147. *paradeigmata*, “patterns,” “examples,” contained within Scripture.

148. Var. “manner.”

149. Var. add “of our confession,” as Heb 3.1.

150. The underlying Greek phrase can also be translated as “slow speech,”

monious voice of the gospel teachings. And this was not all, for he also set us free when we were held captive, having destroyed the ruler of this world, and rescued those who had died¹⁵¹ from the depths of Hades. He likewise founded the church and was appointed ruler over us. By faith he crossed over the Jordan, he gave us the circumcision of the Spirit, and brought us into the kingdom of heaven.

Now the fact that he became one of us is sufficiently demonstrated, I believe, when the divine evangelist says, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us."¹⁵² And that he was anointed as a priest and apostle the induction of Aaron indicates very plainly. For Aaron was anointed with the consecrated oil, and was appointed the ruler and leader of the priests and people. Moreover, he received the golden ornament on the top of his forehead, that is, the metal plate upon which the name of the Lord was written. This item, like a radiant and impressive diadem, was a clear symbol of our Savior the King.¹⁵³

That the ministration that came through Christ is superior to that under the law, one may perceive after a fashion in Aaron, just as was surely the case with Melchizedek. For according to the law the Levites received tithes from the people of Israel. God commanded, however, that a tithe from the Levites should be allotted to Aaron, as their leader, upon whom the highest honors were lavished on account of his particular priestly office. Note then how in the person of Aaron, Levi, the one receiving tithes, was tithed. This is because Aaron was appointed to a role corresponding to that of Christ. All the other Levites and priests performed the sacrifices according to the law, taking their places in the first compartment of the tabernacle. Yet of them all only the divine Aaron entered into the holy of holies once a year, as it is written, and not without blood, in accordance with the [89] law. And in this he was a type of Christ, who died once for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and who proceeded into the

as in the descriptions of Moses and of the law in the third paragraph below this one (on p. 113).

151. Lit. "fallen asleep."

152. Jn 1.14.

153. Var. "of the kingship of our Savior."

most sacred tabernacle above. So, in sanctifying the church by his own blood, he opened up a new way for us.¹⁵⁴

Now the divine Moses, when he was appointed as God's messenger,¹⁵⁵ entreated God and said, "Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither recently, nor in the past, nor since you began to speak to your servant. I stammer and am slow of speech."¹⁵⁶ And to this he added: "Appoint another person, someone capable, whom you can send."¹⁵⁷ Then the God of all answered him, "Is there not Aaron your brother, the Levite? I know that he will indeed speak for you, and behold, he himself is coming to meet you. When he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. And you shall speak to him and put my words in his mouth, and I will instruct you in what you should do. He will speak to the people for you, and he will be your mouth."¹⁵⁸ It must be admitted that the law of long ago was slow of speech and unable to speak distinctly, according to the letter that is, and only in a long and roundabout way did it stammer out, as it were, God's will to us. Christ, however, is the sweeter-sounding "mouth" of Moses,¹⁵⁹ who turns the types into reality, and who sets forth knowledge of those things that are necessary and makes them easily accessible everywhere. It says therefore in the Forty-eighth Psalm, "Hear these things, all you nations; listen, all you inhabitants of the earth."¹⁶⁰

Christ then, for sure, is typified by Aaron, and this is beyond all expectation. Do not be amazed that among those who know him, and in their knowledge of his laws, the majesty of his own excellence is shadowed forth. This even includes how he came as a man of a foreign race, who set Israel free from captivity, who founded the holy and sacred city,¹⁶¹ and who has irresistible power over all.

154. Cf. Heb 10.19–20.

155. Or "apostle."

156. Ex 4.10.

157. Ex 4.13.

158. Ex 4.14–15.

159. By which Cyril seems to mean "Aaron," who has just been described to Moses as "your mouth."

160. Ps 49.1 (48.2 LXX).

161. Var. "land."

These matters I will now explain clearly, and as briefly as possible.

5. Now Judah was at one time taken into captivity, and the people of Israel spent a lengthy period in Babylon, afflicted with a grievous and brutal servitude. But then Cyrus, son of Cambyses, king of both the Medes and the Persians, when he came to power, conducted a war against the neighboring Assyrians.¹⁶² At that time he also forcibly seized Babylon itself and set free the Jews, who were bemoaning the wrongdoing of the Assyrians and whose eyes were running with tears. They firmly believed it had been predicted by God through the mouth of his saints¹⁶³ that he would eventually come and that he himself would overwhelm their adversaries and undo the bonds of the oppressed, and that he himself would raise up his house again in Jerusalem, which the Assyrians had burnt down and so acted profanely against God.

If we examine the writings of the holy prophets, we shall find that the people of Israel were not speaking falsely in these matters. This is what God said through the mouth of Isaiah: "Thus says the Lord who redeems you, and who forms you from the womb: 'I am the Lord who performs these things; I alone stretched out the heavens and established the earth. Who else [92] will frustrate the omens of the soothsayers and diviners who speak from their own heart? He turns wise men backward and makes their counsel foolishness. He confirms the words of his servant and establishes the truth of the counsel of his messengers. He is the one who says to Jerusalem, "You shall be inhabited," and to the cities of Judah, "You shall be built," and he will raise up her desolated places. It is he who says to the deep, "Be dry, and I will dry up your rivers." It is he who tells Cyrus to be wise, and that he will perform all he desires. He says to Jerusalem, "You shall be built," and "I will lay the foundation of my holy house." Thus says the Lord God to my anointed one, Cyrus, whose right hand I have held, that the nations might be obedient to him; and I will break the might of kings. I will open gates before him and cities will not be shut up: "I will go before

162. Cyril here refers to the inhabitants of Babylonia as "Assyrians."

163. That is, the prophets.

you, and I will level mountains; I will shatter gates of bronze and break iron bars. I will give you the treasures of darkness, and I will open up to you hidden and unseen treasures, so that you may know that I, the Lord God, who calls you by name, am the God of Israel. For the sake of Jacob my servant and of Israel my chosen, I will call you by your name and will accept you. But you did not know that I am the Lord God, and there is 'no other God beside me, and you have not known me.'""¹⁶⁴

Note how it distinctly says, "you have not known me." Not even among those who do know him did God deem one worthy to be appointed to such prominence, one whom he himself ordained to be superior to kings and lord of so many thousands of the Gentiles. Now those things relating to him were in fact figures of what was accomplished through Christ. For he foretold how he himself would frustrate the false divinations of the Babylonians and the omens of the soothsayers.¹⁶⁵ But the counsels, or predictions, of his own prophets, whom he also called his messengers,¹⁶⁶ he would show to be true. So he made it known before it happened that he would build the cities of Judah, and that he would make the deep become dry and would dry up all its rivers. By "the deep," I understand it to be speaking of Babylon, on account of the large number of people living in it. Its "rivers" are those of the nations who flowed into it from all over, seeking aid.

We shall now come to speak clearly of the things concerning Cyrus, skillfully¹⁶⁷ transforming those things accomplished by him into matters relating to the mystery of Christ.

6. Now Cyrus, whose mother was Mandane the daughter of Astyages, a ruler of the Medes, and whose father was Camby-ses of the race of Persia, was extremely moderate¹⁶⁸ in his ways. Therefore, certain of the ancients called Cyrus a "mule," and also "one of a different nature." This was, I suppose, because his father and mother were of different races, for the Persians were of a nation different from the Medes.

¹⁶⁴. Is 44.24-45.5.

¹⁶⁵. Cf. Is 44.25.

¹⁶⁶. Or "angels."

¹⁶⁷. See n. 2 above on p. 81.

¹⁶⁸. Or "fair," "reasonable."

You see then how this relates to Christ. For with respect to the flesh he was born of a mother, the holy Virgin, who was of human nature as we are. His father, however, was not at all like us, but, if we might express it so, he was of a completely different race, quite removed from us in nature, surpassing everything that was created. Accordingly, Christ said to the Jews who thought that he was like us and was born as we are, "You are from below, I am from above."¹⁶⁹

Cyrus exercised power over many thousands of the Gentiles, and every city opened up to him.¹⁷⁰ He received treasures of darkness, hidden [93] and unseen treasures, and set Israel free from its long bondage. Emmanuel became king over everything under heaven, and every city receives him as the Savior and Redeemer of all. He now sets free every race that is bound by a devilish servitude and oppression, and that is compelled to act under the devil's control. Also, having descended into Hades he emptied the treasures of darkness, hidden and unseen treasures. He shattered gates of bronze and broke iron bars. For "he said to those in bonds, 'Come out,' and to those in darkness, 'Show yourselves.'"¹⁷¹

Furthermore, in times past God said to Job, that most long-suffering and invincible champion, "Have you been to the source of the sea, or have you walked in the paths of the deep? Did the gates of death open up to you out of fear, or did the portals of Hades quake when they saw you?"¹⁷² From these questions we should understand that the words indicate those things accomplished through Christ, and those things done in the very depths of Hades.¹⁷³ "For to this end Christ died and came to life, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living."¹⁷⁴

Also, Cyrus long ago, having donated what was necessary, decreed that the temple in Jerusalem should be rebuilt. But Emmanuel founded the church, which is the real holy and re-

169. Jn 8.23.

170. Or "welcomed him."

171. Is 49.9.

172. Jb 38.16-17.

173. Var. "of death."

174. Rom 14.9.

nowned city, having wholly overthrown the most shameless and wanton idolatry, which was in a way like Babylon.

Further concerning Cyrus, God said, “He will perform all my will.”¹⁷⁵ To the people of the Jews who rejected him, the Savior of us all declared in a certain place, “You judge according to the flesh,”¹⁷⁶ and elsewhere he said, “Even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for I do not seek my own will, but the will of the Father who sent me.”¹⁷⁷

To Cyrus, God also said, “I have called you by my name.”¹⁷⁸ So Emmanuel, although he came as a man, is truly “the Lord.”

Now, that the matters concerning Cyrus serve as a figure of the glory of Christ, the following words spoken by the prophet make perfectly clear: “It is I who made the earth and humankind upon it. With my own hands I established the heavens, and I commanded all the stars. I raised him up in righteousness, and all his ways are just. He is the one who will build my city and return the captives of my people, not for ransom or reward, says the Lord of hosts. Thus says the Lord: Egypt has labored, and the merchandise of the Ethiopians, and the Sabeans, men of stature, will pass over to you and will be your slaves. They will follow you with their hands bound in fetters, they will bow down to you and make supplication to you, because God is in you, and they will say, ‘There is no God beside you.’¹⁷⁹ For you are God, and we did not know it, the Savior, the God of Israel.’ All those who oppose him will be ashamed and disgraced, and they will walk in shame.”¹⁸⁰ For he who made the earth and humankind upon it, who adorned the heavens with the stars, raised up Jesus as our righteousness, who redeems us freely, for we have been

175. Is 44.28.

176. Jn 8.15.

177. Jn 8.16; 5.30. Cyril’s argument here is that Christ, like Cyrus before him, acted according to the will of God, while the Jews acted according to the flesh.

178. Cf. Is 45.4. The Hebrew text and some Greek manuscripts read “by your name.”

179. The text of the LXX is confused at this point in the matter of reference, and Cyril, or his editor, has made some necessary changes to render it more comprehensible.

180. Is 45.12–16.

justified by faith. It is Jesus who releases us from our bonds and captivity, who builds up the spiritual Jerusalem, and who founds the [96] church, which cannot be shaken even by the gates of Hades, nor be overcome by its enemies. It is he whom those in the past who were going astray recognized as being true God in nature, saying, "For you are our God, and we did not know it, and there is no God besides you." Him they shall worship, to him every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.¹⁸¹ Some of the people of Israel dared to oppose him, but they were put to shame and cast down, and walked in the manner described by the prophet.

So then, Cyrus son of Cambyses founded the house of God in Jerusalem as a type of Christ. But that it would be Emmanuel himself who fulfilled the oracle spiritually, one may learn directly by means of another figure. For when Cyrus set Israel free from their bondage in Babylon, straight away leaders were appointed to rule over the people, namely Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel from the tribe of Judah, and Jeshua son of Jozadek, the high priest. And when they came to Jerusalem, God commanded them through the mouth of Haggai the prophet to attend to the work of building his house. This is what is written: "In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came through Haggai the prophet, saying, 'Tell Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel from the tribe of Judah and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, the high priest, saying, "Thus says the Lord Almighty: This people say, 'The time has not come to build the house of the Lord.' Then the word came through Haggai the prophet, saying, 'Is it time for you to live in paneled houses, while the house of the Lord lies in ruins?'"¹⁸² After this it further says, "And the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel from the tribe of Judah and the spirit of Jeshua the son of Jozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the rest of the people. And they went in and worked in the house of the Lord Almighty their God."¹⁸³

181. Cf. Phil 2.10-11.

182. Hg 1.1-4.

183. Hg 1.14.

Note, then, how Emmanuel is present here in a twofold type and image, as a king in Zerubbabel, who was from the tribe of Judah, the tribe to whose lot it then fell to exercise authority in Israel, and also as a high priest in his namesake,¹⁸⁴ Jeshua the great high priest. Note him,¹⁸⁵ moreover, as the leader on the journey to the holy city from the land of foreigners, the Babylonians, that is, and as the craftsman and overseer of the work on the holy temple. For through faith we follow our leader Christ, as king and high priest, coming out of diabolical oppression, from the land of foreigners, so to speak, and out of worldly deceit, we enter into the holy city, the church of the firstborn, which Christ himself raises up, building it with spiritual stones, as it were. Paul also, writing to those who had been redeemed through faith, who sought to follow in the footsteps of Christ, would testify and say, "In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place of Christ in the Spirit."¹⁸⁶

Furthermore, that the glory of the church would be greater than that which was there at first, in ancient times, that is to say, the [97] temple made of stones, God indicated when he further said through the mouth of Haggai, "Who is there among you that saw this house in its former glory? And how do you see it now? Is it not as nothing in your sight?"¹⁸⁷ Also after other matters it says, "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, says the Lord Almighty. For the latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, says the Lord Almighty. And in this place I will give peace, even peace of soul as a possession for everyone who works to raise up this temple."¹⁸⁸

One could easily gather together those instances in which Christ is portrayed to us in the people of old. Yet, so that our discourse may not seem to be carried away by many more examples than would be appropriate, we declare that we shall allow ourselves to pass over the others for the time being.

184. The name Jesus is the Greek equivalent to the Hebrew "Jeshua" or "Joshua."

185. This would seem to refer back to Emmanuel.

186. Eph 2.22. The scriptural verse in today's Bibles reads "of God" rather than Cyril's "of Christ."

187. Hg 2.3.

188. Hg 2.8–9.

Surely then, we are altogether obliged to choose one of two options. We may completely set aside¹⁸⁹ those through whom these matters came to pass, censuring the great imperfection of the types, since they are understood to have been expressed through people like us, even though they were greatly worthy of God. Or else, claiming that it is always the Spirit that has taken on a form like our own, we will be obliged also to acknowledge that the Spirit once took on a form as Cyrus, who did not know God, for it was said to him, "you have not known me." Yet if those people who serve as types are done away with, this would equally apply to Aaron as a shadow, and to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, as well as to Jeshua the son of Jozadak, the high priest, as they would have existed in mere name only.

7. I rather consider, however, that those who have been persuaded by reasonable arguments rightly consent to the view that Melchizedek was a man who reigned over the city of Salem, and that Paul, being of subtle mind, presented him as a type of Christ for our spiritual contemplation. Yet there are those who have subsequently opposed this view, and claim nothing other than that Melchizedek was not a man, but that he was the Holy Spirit, or at least another heavenly power from above that had some ministerial function.¹⁹⁰

Since it pleases some to think thus, we are compelled to say that they err in two respects. They drag down the divine and ineffable Being of the Spirit in a manner that is quite improper for him, and they absurdly raise up to a sublime glory the creature that was begotten and made. In what way this is so I shall state.

With regard to Melchizedek it is written that he was priest of God Most High. But if Melchizedek was the Holy Spirit, then the Spirit is brought down into priestly service and takes on a ministerial duty. So he himself would in fact sing praises with the holy angels to God above, for it is written, "Bless the Lord, all his angels, his ministers who do his will."¹⁹¹ For it is patently obvious that one who serves as priest does so entirely for another and does not serve himself, but he serves God, who is preeminent.

189. Or "reject," "do away with," "annul," "destroy."

190. See n. 135 above.

191. Ps 103.21 (102.21 LXX).

Therefore, if we say that the Spirit¹⁹² became a priest, his divine nature is utterly abased. Rather, he too would be classed among creatures and worship along with us. He would not in any way consecrate¹⁹³ himself, since it is surely the case that what is consecrated is consecrated by what is wholly greater than its own nature. Yet he would be consecrated with us. So how could one who is consecrated still also be God in nature? [100] For is not every priest consecrated, and following this embarks upon his ministerial duties?

Now "no one takes to himself this honor," as it is written, "but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was."¹⁹⁴ Then Paul adds, "It was not Christ who gave himself the glory of being begotten as a high priest, but it was the one who said to him, 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you.' As he also says in another place, 'You are a priest for ever in the order of Melchizedek.'"¹⁹⁵

It is necessary for one to know that the Son himself, the Word from God the Father, is not said to be a priest and to take up a ministerial function, unless he is considered to have become one of us. Thus, as he was called a prophet as well as an apostle, on account of his humanity, so also a priest. For a serving role was fitting for one in the form of a servant, and this is what the emptying was. For although he was in the form of the Father and equal to him before whom the seraphim stand in heaven and who is served by thousands and thousands of angels, when he emptied himself, he is then said to be shown forth as a minister of the saints and of the true tabernacle. The one who is over all creation was then also sanctified¹⁹⁶ along with us. For it says, "he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all of one origin."¹⁹⁷ For this reason he is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying, 'I will declare your name to my brothers.'"¹⁹⁸ So, while as

192. Var. add "Holy."

193. Or "sanctify."

194. Heb 5.4.

195. Heb 5.5-6; Ps 110.4 (109.4 LXX).

196. In the following discussion the verb "sanctify" may also be rendered "consecrate."

197. Or "from one Father" (as NASB). Greek: *ex henos*.

198. Heb 2.11-12; Ps 22.22 (21.23 LXX).

God he is one who sanctifies, when he became man and tabernacled among us, and was called our brother with respect to his humanity, then it is said that he was also sanctified with us.

So now, in the economy of his flesh he is behoved to perform a priestly duty and to be sanctified with us. And if we aim to think correctly and without error, we will attribute these things to the limitations imposed by the act of emptying himself. So if we say that the Spirit in no way underwent an emptying to become a priest, we would deprive him of the glory due to one who is divine, and reckon what is begotten to be among those beings that are below God, placing a limitation upon him. Or else, let them show us that the Spirit did indeed become a man, and underwent the subordination that pertains to this economy, just as the Son in fact did. For while the holy and adored Trinity is of the same substance, one would not for that reason ascribe the Incarnation to whatever Person one chose. For only the Son became man, and not the Father, nor the Holy Spirit. This is the mystery that the divine Scriptures have taught us.

What violence they do to the truth, in that the one who had no occasion to empty himself, namely the Holy Spirit, if he is actually to be counted among the number of those serving as priests, they bring him down into the limited state of having emptied himself! For Melchizedek was indeed a priest. Yet they claim that the Spirit himself took on form in this way to the honor of the Son in being a type of Christ's priesthood that was to come later. I would therefore ask, even though it would be foolish to think or say such a thing, whether the Holy Spirit has neglected the honor of the Son and love for him, and whether he would consider doing so to be of little worth. For the Paraclete, which is the Spirit, glorifies the Son [101], and concerning him the Son says, "He will glorify me."¹⁹⁹ This being so, why then did not he who wished to bestow honor in this perpetual manner rather become Aaron?²⁰⁰ Why did he not also become

199. Jn 16.14.

200. In what follows, Cyril's argument is that if it was the intention of the Holy Spirit to honor the Son by typifying him through Melchizedek, then why did not the Spirit also do this with respect to other OT characters generally understood to be types of Christ? This would surely have been to bestow even greater honor upon the Son.

Cyrus who ruled over the Persians and the Medes? What of Joshua son of Jozadak, and Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel from the tribe of Judah? And what of Moses, respecting whom it is said that he showed forth in himself the mediation of Christ—"I will raise up a prophet for them, like you, from among their brothers; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he will speak to them as I will command him"?²⁰¹ Or why did he not become Joshua son of Nun, the commander after Moses, who led the people of Israel across the Jordan, and circumcised them with stone knives, and brought them into the promised land? Were we not baptized in Christ and circumcised with the circumcision done without hands through the Spirit, and have we not become heirs of the kingdom of heaven? Yet is this not obvious? Or if we should grant that the Spirit has every time taken on the form of each of those named in order that he might honor the Son, that is, to assume for the moment that the matter is true, how little proper concern of the Spirit would be seen in this, for it would amount to saying that certain of the men of ancient times had been created only to be types and similitudes of the Son. Away with this absurd reasoning! Melchizedek therefore was a man, and not the Holy Spirit.

8. We shall now explain that Melchizedek cannot be understood to be a holy and ministering power, as some like to think, and we shall gather together appropriate arguments to demonstrate the truth of this. Now to these people the matter, as they themselves see it, seems to be so cleverly established. For since, they claim, it was written regarding Melchizedek that he was without father, without mother, and without genealogy, and that he even blessed such a one as Abraham, and there is no doubt that the lesser is blessed by the better and greater,²⁰² he should not be understood to be one of us, but to be by nature an angel, that is, one of those grand and glorious ministering powers of heaven.

I for my part, beloved, am greatly astonished that a kind of reverence for the divine Abraham has led them away from the pursuit of what is right and profitable, and has caused them to

²⁰¹ Dt 18.18.

²⁰² Cf. Heb 7.7.

stray from the arguments necessary for learning the truth. For when they portray to us Melchizedek as a similitude and type of Emmanuel, they do not consider the quality of his actions or discern the manner of his priesthood. Instead, they examine the natures of those present in the account. What trouble would be caused, one might appropriately ask them, were Abraham to have been blessed by Melchizedek as by a mere man, and not one who might be considered superior to him? For it is not their natures, but the meaning of the things being enacted, which is to be discerned—words of truth that portray in advance better things than the shadowy figures. For it is most improper, rather than to draw parallels between the events depicted and those things expressed in shadows, to pronounce instead upon the natures of those presented within the account, and thereby to know of such matters.

Aaron was a specially chosen person, one who presided over and governed the holy tabernacle, and who was adorned with the highest honors of priesthood. [104] How then was he sanctified?²⁰³ Was not a ram slain, and the lobe of his right ear anointed with its blood, as well as the extremities of his right hand and foot?²⁰⁴ When this had been performed he was ready to minister as priest. Dear friends, I would say, however, to these people that if the good element is associated with the natures of those sanctifying and of those sanctified, rather than arising out of their being a type and shadow relating to the excellent truth to come, how is it still the case that the lesser is blessed by the greater? What the greater in these things might be, let them declare. Shall we then put Aaron lower than a ram, seeing that what is rational is perfected by an irrational animal? If we should say that the one chosen for the priesthood was sanctified by the blood of sheep, and that the sprinkling of a heifer's blood sanctified the defiled, as regards the purification of the body, what would the point then be? Where is the depth of understanding?

The things enacted were types and images, and if we may put it thus, they were a foreshowing of the sanctification which is in

203. See n. 196 above.

204. Cf. Lv 8.22–23.

Christ. The type lies in what was done; it is not to be apprehended in the nature of those sanctifying, nor in the nature of those being sanctified. While it is so, as I said just now, that the greater is blessed by the lesser, the nature of a man is actually greater than that of a heifer or a ram. So one should not be embarrassed at this, that even though Abraham was much greater than Melchizedek, it says that he was blessed by him. For the type consisted in the one who was victorious, and not in the nature of the one blessing.

I marvel, then, that while they represent Melchizedek as a similitude and type of the Son, they say that it was as an angel that he was without mother or father, even though both these facts were in a certain way applicable to Christ also. For the holy Virgin was his mother upon earth, and God is his Father in heaven. I believe it then to be necessary for the figures to be portrayed as relating to such archetypal matters. Yet since the divine Paul said that Melchizedek had "neither beginning of days nor end of life,"²⁰⁵ they thus contend that he was a ministering spiritual power, not realizing that something of crucial importance has escaped their notice. For none of those things that are created would be without a beginning with respect to time, but absolutely everything brought into existence also has a beginning of life and of days.

So what then was the blessed Paul's intention in these words? How did he depict Melchizedek as a type and similitude of Christ? Rejecting any interpretation arising out of careless reasoning, we shall now examine this matter and discuss it as we are able.

9. Paul, being very much learned in the law, does not offer an account to the Jews based on mere arguments, but on the Mosaic writings, which even those well acquainted with combating the truth would probably not be willing to disregard. So he takes Melchizedek as a similitude and pattern of Christ, in that he is called the king of righteousness and of peace. For according to its mystical sense this would be appropriate, it seems to me, solely for Emmanuel, the Lord of righteousness and peace who has been manifested to those upon the earth. And in him we

205. Heb 7:3.

have been justified, having rid ourselves of the burden of sin. [105] We also have peace with God the Father, having washed off the impurity of our ways that divided us and kept us apart, being united, as it were, to him through the Spirit, for “whoever is joined to the Lord,” it says, “is one Spirit with him.”²⁰⁶

So then, Melchi rendered into the Greek language is “king,” and Zedek is “righteousness.” One might see Melchizedek as abounding in the sense of his own name, according to the import of what is signified by “king of righteousness.” And when he is said to be king of Salem, he is “king of peace.” The divine Paul therefore applied these things to Christ, since he most plainly resembles Melchizedek. Moreover, Melchizedek took up the symbols of the priesthood that excels the law, offering Abraham both wine and bread when he blessed him. Likewise, we are not blessed in any other way except through Christ, the great and true priest. We are blessed like the divine Abraham, as we prevail mightily over the rulers of this age, showing that we are superior to the power of our enemies, and that we have no need of anything that is in the world. Rather, we count those things we have from God, the glorious and never-failing supply of heavenly gifts, as spiritual riches.

It is to be understood that Melchizedek blessed Abraham when he had won his victory and was returning from the defeat of the kings, as it is written, and when he did not deign to accept anything from the ruler of Sodom. For the one who ruled the people of Sodom spoke to Abraham as to one who was victorious, and said, “*Give me the men, and take the horses for yourself.*”²⁰⁷ Abraham, however, was determined to claim nothing that belonged to that man. “*I stretch out my hand,*” he said, “*to God Most High, who created heaven and earth, and swear that I will not take from all that is yours even a thread or a strap, so that you may not say, ‘I made Abraham rich.’*”²⁰⁸ For it is not the habit of the saints to rejoice over worldly riches.

206. 1 Cor 6.17.

207. Gn 14.21. Cyril follows the LXX in translating the Hebrew term *ṛkûš* as “horses” rather than “goods.” The original translators confused the former with *rekeš*, meaning “steeds” (cf. 1 Kgs 4.28 [5.8 MT]).

208. Gn 14.22–23.

So we, having prevailed over enemies visible and invisible, and accepting nothing from the world, but rather valuing heavenly riches, are blessed through Christ, the king of peace. We are blessed, as it were, with a heavenly gift, and we receive the mysteries as the provisions of life. These may for the present be left unmentioned, if it so pleases, yet we are blessed by Christ and by his entreaties on our behalf to the Father. Now when Melchizedek blessed Abraham, he said, *“Blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand.”* Whereas our Lord Jesus Christ, the atoning sacrifice²⁰⁹ for us all, said, “Holy Father, keep them in your truth.”²¹⁰

From the interpretation of the names, then, Paul takes hold of what serves to prefigure Christ. He makes it clear also that the manner of priesthood itself shows the same thing, for Melchizedek brought out bread and wine. That Melchizedek, however, was without father and without mother, that is, without a genealogy, and that he had no beginning of days or end of life, the sacred Scripture nowhere expressly indicates. One might perhaps then say that [108] the divine Paul has uttered a lie. This is not what we say, not at all, for he is speaking the truth. Rather, the skilled instructor in mysteries holds to a spiritual interpretation, taking this as a figure of the glory of Emmanuel and as an account relating to the very matters of the divine economy. For the inspired Scripture reveals to us only the fact that Melchizedek was a priest. It does not identify his descent or the origins of his father or mother. Yet neither does it set a limit to how many years he lived, nor do we find that the kind of succession accompanying his priestly office is revealed. Consequently, the narrative of such things is outlined in figures for us, and this in a way resembles the perpetual nature of Christ that was without beginning, when he is considered as God. When it says “without beginning,” evidently it is talking about quantity, quantity of time that is, for he himself is the Maker of the ages.²¹¹ Besides this, it indicates the unceasing nature of his priesthood. Accordingly, the blessed Paul said with regard to Melchizedek that “he

209. *hilastêrion*, “propitiation,” “propitiatory offering.”

210. Cf. Jn 17.11, 17.

211. *aîônôn*, “ages,” “eternity,” “world.”

had neither beginning of days nor end of life, but being like the Son of God, he remains a priest for ever.”²¹²

It appears that some other subtle matter is also intended. What this is, and the manner of it, I will now try to explain.

10. The Jews opposed what was proclaimed concerning Christ, and were so bold as to despise the zealous deeds of the apostles. They held to two courses of action. One of these was to nullify the command prescribed to the fathers through the mouth of the all-wise Moses as being something impossible to do, setting the law at naught, and so a different manner of living that was not recognized by those of ancient times was unexpectedly introduced. The other thing was that they did not insist upon restricting the glory of the priesthood to the tribe that was specially chosen, namely that of Levi. Yet God everywhere keeps away from the sanctuary those who were not of the priestly ministry, and instantly decrees the ultimate punishment for audacity in such a matter.

Now Paul, being an expert in the law, also endeavors to explain fully, both from reasonable arguments and from the inspired Scripture, that the coming of a new law heralds a change in the priesthood as well. And each of these is clearly indicated beforehand by means of types.

Paul accepts that Melchizedek was not from the tribe of Levi, and then shows that he was a priest of God Most High, who brought forth bread and wine. This is what he says about him: “See how great this man was, to whom even Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth of the spoils. And those of the Levites who received the priestly office had the commandment to tithe the people, that is, their kinsmen, according to the law, even though they had come forth from the loins of Abraham. But this man, whose genealogy is not derived from them, received tithes from Abraham, and blessed the one who had the promises. Now without any dispute, the lesser is blessed by the greater.”²¹³ Nevertheless, we say that the excellence of Melchizedek lay not in his nature, but in the manner of his priesthood. As our forefather Abraham did not hold back, but set apart a portion to present to

²¹². Heb 7:3.

²¹³. Heb 7:4-7.

him, in this way, through the presentation of tithes, he thought to honor him.

Now [109] those of the line of Levi received tithes from the people, even though they were their kinsmen, but this man Melchizedek, who was not of their genealogy (as he was not of the tribe of Levi), took tithes from Abraham and blessed him. Now there is a figure present in these things. Once again being portrayed here by means of shadows is Christ, who was likewise without genealogy with respect to those appointed to serve as priests under the law (for he was descended from the tribe of Judah, in connection with which Moses said nothing regarding priests),²¹⁴ and who received tithes from the Levites, that is, from the priesthood under the law. So Christ long ago received tithes in Melchizedek, and later in Aaron too. For Aaron himself also obtained tithes from the Levites, so presenting a type of the priesthood of Christ, as we said above.

11. So through Melchizedek it has been demonstrated that at some time there would be a change in the manner of the priesthood, of the tribe serving as priests under the law, as indeed was so, and that another kind of priesthood and law would arise. For it was necessary that when the priestly ministries were changed, there was at the same time also a change in the law itself. Accordingly, the divine Paul speaks of these matters wisely when he says, “Now if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there to speak of another priest arising in the order of Melchizedek, and not in the order of Aaron? For when there is a change in the priesthood, of necessity there is also a change in the law.”²¹⁵ And again, “And this is far more apparent if another priest arises in the order²¹⁶ of Melchizedek, who has become a priest, not through a law of physical descent, but through the power of an indestructible life. For it is attested of him, ‘You are a priest for ever in the order of Melchizedek.’”²¹⁷

²¹⁴. Cf. Heb 7.14.

²¹⁵. Heb 7.11–12.

²¹⁶. The text of Hebrews here actually says, “according to the likeness [*homoiotês*] of Melchizedek.”

²¹⁷. Heb 7.15–17.


See how he affirms that nothing could bring about perfection through the priesthood under the law, and so he declares that a better and more beneficial ordinance would be brought in instead. For if what was needful existed in that former priesthood, why not rather, he says, indicate that there would be another priest in the order of Aaron, and not in the order of Melchizedek, a similitude and type of Christ, who did not at all further serve as a priest in a fleshly manner, but through the power of an indestructible life? For through his mystical priestly ministrations he sustains²¹⁸ us for a life that is unending, even as Aaron was serving as a priest in a fleshly manner. For through the latter there were sacrifices of oxen and the slaying of sheep, and the sprinkling of those who were defiled with the ashes of a heifer for the purification of the flesh, and other things besides these, which did not perfect the consciences of the worshipers, since it is not possible for the blood of bulls to take away sins.²¹⁹ Therefore, when another kind of priestly ministry was brought in for us, having deposed the first and more ancient practices, there was also a completely different priest. God promised a new covenant when the first had become old, this being the priest in the order of Melchizedek, with regard to whom it was proper to understand that he would live for ever. This was none other than our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom and with whom be glory to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

218. *trephei*, "nourishes."

219. Cf. Heb 10.4.

BOOK THREE: GENESIS 15–27

[112] *Concerning Abraham, the promise regarding Isaac,
and how through them the mystery of the
faith was prefigured*

HE DIVINE PAUL writes that Christ became the high priest and apostle of our confession.¹ And further, he plainly affirmed that Christ became the guarantor of a better covenant which he inaugurated for us,² namely that of the gospel, a covenant which is incomparably superior to and which far surpasses the ancient ordinance given through Moses. And this word is true. For the law in fact produces wrath,³ and serves to expose sin, but the grace administered through the goodness of our Savior justifies us. He himself says in a certain place that he did not come to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through him.⁴

So, even though he did not come from the tribe of Levi with respect to the flesh, he is called and actually is a high priest for ever in the priestly order of Melchizedek, as the word has now made abundantly plain to us.⁵ Also, because the mystery of righteousness by faith is foreannounced earlier in the law of circumcision, and because it is portrayed beforehand in type to the people of Israel, there can never be any other way to be saved except through Christ alone, who justifies the ungodly and forgives the charges against them.

Besides this, we may now say that those related to the promise made in Isaac to the blessed Abraham are heirs of God and

1. Heb 3.1.

2. Cf. Heb 7.22.

3. Cf. Rom 4.15.

4. Jn 12.47.

5. Cf. Heb 5.6; 7.17; Ps 110.4 (109.4 LXX).

have been allocated a place among those who are most certainly his true children, since we⁶ obtain this from the sacred Scriptures themselves, and consider them to be absolutely trustworthy in each and every detail.

2. Now the most holy Paul writes to the Romans, "What shall we say, then, that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, found? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. What in fact does the Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.'⁷ To the one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift, but as something due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness. So also David speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works: 'Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not reckon against him.'⁸ Is this blessedness, then, for the circumcised, or for [113] the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness. So how was it reckoned? When he was circumcised or uncircumcised? It was not when he was circumcised, it says, but when uncircumcised. He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness he had by faith when uncircumcised, so that he would be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, in order that righteousness might be reckoned to them. And he is also the father of the circumcised who are not only circumcised but who follow in the footsteps of the faith which our father Abraham had when he was uncircumcised.'⁹

In addition to this, Paul gives a yet stronger affirmation of the mystery. This is what he says: "For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world was not through law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if those who are of the law are heirs," he says, "faith is made void and the promise is of no effect, because the law produces wrath. Where

6. Or "they."

7. Gn 15.6.

8. Ps 32.1-2 (31.1-2 LXX).

9. Rom 4.1-12.

there is no law, there is no transgression. For this reason, the promise is of faith, so that by grace it may be made sure to all the offspring, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all (as it is written, 'I have made you the father of many nations'),¹⁰ our father in the sight of God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that do not exist."¹¹

Note that it is stated and maintained throughout, and that not in a short space, how it was not when he was circumcised, but rather while still uncircumcised, that the grace was given to Abraham that justified him through faith. It is also stated that those wishing to follow in the footsteps of the faith that our forefather Abraham had when uncircumcised are made heirs of the gifts given by God, while they do not at all make it their habit to vaunt over the shadow ministered through Moses and boast in Abraham as a fleshly father. The latter was called "father of many nations," and though Israel was then just one nation, it would expand into an innumerable multitude. For Abraham became the father of those with faith, who are from all parts, that is to say, gathered out of every land and city. They have been made fellow members of the body of Christ and have been called into a spiritual brotherhood.

The Jews are indeed descended from Abraham. "Not all those of Israel," however, "are Israel, neither are the offspring of Abraham all his children."¹² Rather, the faith that he had resides in those who have come to believe while uncircumcised. For the promise was made and the grace that justifies was given, not when Abraham was circumcised, but when he was uncircumcised, according to the faith of the sacred Scriptures.

3. Though the promise came through Abraham, that the gift of righteousness by faith did not pertain solely to him but also spread to all others who have come to believe, the most-wise Paul also affirms to us. To what I said just now he adds, "It was not written for his sake alone that 'it was reckoned to him as righteousness,' but for our sakes also, for those who believe in

10. Gn 17.5.

11. Rom 4.13–17.

12. Rom 9.6–7.

him who raised our Lord Jesus from the dead, who was delivered up [116] for our transgressions, and was raised for our righteousness."¹³

So then, the grace that justifies us on the basis of faith is a provision from heaven and a gift coming down from the divine beneficence. And those are counted among the children of Abraham who are not merely descended from him with respect to the flesh, but those who have been richly blessed in the same way as he was, and who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, considering themselves to be brothers. It is these, who disdain the unbelief of Israel according to the flesh, that will be heirs of the gifts from God. This is represented in an especially clear¹⁴ way in the mystery regarding Isaac.

Let us now speak of this as we are able, setting forth what Moses wrote so as to make it known.¹⁵ There it reads as follows: *After these things the word of the Lord came to Abraham in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Abraham; I myself will protect you. Your reward will be exceedingly great."* Abraham said, "Master, what will you give me, since I go childless, and this Eliezer of Damascus, the son of Masek¹⁶ my maidservant, will be my heir?" He further said, "Seeing that you have not given me any offspring, my household servant will receive my inheritance." And immediately the voice of the Lord came to him, saying, "This man will not receive your inheritance, but one who shall come forth from you will be your heir." Then he took him outside and said to him, "Look up at the sky and count the stars, if you are able to number them." And he said, "So shall your offspring be." Then Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.¹⁷

Living together with Abraham was his spouse, the blessed Sarah (which means "princess"), an eminently beautiful and fine-looking woman, as the sacred Scripture testifies. Yet the home-born servant was persuaded to render service by entering into a second, unlawful union; this was Hagar (which means "wanderer").¹⁸ Sarah, not yet having experienced the pangs of giving

13. Rom 4.24.

14. Var. "detailed."

15. Var. add "accurately."

16. Var. "my son by my maidservant."

17. Gn 15.1-6.

18. The name Hagar is, in fact, of uncertain meaning.

birth to her own children, lamented her childlessness. Hagar, on the other hand, gave birth to Ishmael.

These, then, are the matters contained in the literal sense of the account. God addressed Abraham, saying, "*I myself will protect you. Your reward will be exceedingly great.*" What did he say in answer to this? "*Master, what will you give me, since I go childless, and this Eliezer of Damascus, the son of Masek¹⁹ my maidservant, will be my heir?*" Observe the words carefully. "*What will you give me, O Master?*" he says. You note how he asks for absolutely nothing in the way of earthly possessions, nor that he might become the owner of yet more things. He would consider nothing more pleasing, he says, than that he should have a proper heir, one who was truly a son, born of his marriage to the free woman.

Take note then, for a clear understanding of what is profitable, that human nature acts on its own instincts and without written laws. Although there was a son, Ishmael, the divine Abraham called himself childless.²⁰ So human nature very obviously recognized that it was not at all suitable to call him a son who had been brought forth from a fraudulent and illegitimate marriage. For, according to what is written, "he will not put down deep roots."²¹ Though there [117] might have been a child for them from the maidservant at that time, it was a completely lifeless and vain affair, nor was it described with the joy appropriate to a marriage with a free woman. This is demonstrated when Abraham says, "*this Eliezer of Damascus, the son of Masek my maidservant, will be my heir.*" That is, the son of the home-born servant would henceforth be a "kiss of blood" to him, for that is the meaning of "Damascus."²² He would also be reckoned as a "help" and "succor" from God, for that is the meaning of "Eliezer."²³ So it is as though he expressly said, "The son of my home-born servant will, of necessity, be a kiss of blood and a help from God instead of the blood of a real son and of

19. Var. omit "of Masek."

20. The sequence of events here is inaccurate; see n. 33 below.

21. Cf. Wis 4.3.

22. Elements within the name "Damascus" bear some resemblance to the Hebrew words for "blood" and "kiss." The order, however, prohibits the meaning "kiss of blood."

23. Here the meaning of the name is correctly given.

the love ...²⁴ and he will also be my heir. What, then, will you give me? Unless I have a real son to succeed me, O Master, this Abraham of yours will be utterly reproached on all sides, for the man who is destitute of true children will be abandoned even by the free woman."

God, however, does not leave the righteous grieving for long. Immediately the offspring was promised in Isaac, an offspring that he also says would be equal in number to the uncountable host of stars. And it was affirmed that Abraham would be called the father of such a great multitude of nations, even though he was greatly dismayed by his childlessness. Then it says, *Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness*. So the one who by faith honors the Master of all has righteousness as a reward. This bore witness to the fact that it was possible for everything to go well for him. But the one who disbelieves and who is indifferent will be boastful and insolent. Thus he will be called to account and incur punishment.

So Abraham believed God and was justified by him. Now it requires a sign to confirm the truth of those things previously promised, that they would come to pass. God, therefore, by way of accommodation²⁵ provided confirmation by binding himself with an oath, not letting him who believed be troubled in any way by a doubting mind. For this is what is written: *He said to him, "I am the God who brought you out of the land of the Chaldeans, to give you this land as an inheritance."* And Abraham asked, "Lord and Master, how shall I know that I will inherit it?" God said to him, "Bring me a three-year-old heifer;²⁶ a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a dove." So he brought all these to him, and he cut them in two halves and placed them opposite each other. The birds, however, he did not cut in two. Then birds of prey came down upon the divided carcasses, so Abraham sat down with the pieces. Around the time the sun was setting, a trance came upon Abraham, and behold, a great, dark dread fell upon him. Then Abraham was told, "Know of a certainty that your

24. The Greek text appears corrupted at this point.

25. *oikonomikôs*.

26. Although Cyril omits the "three-year-old goat" from the list of animals here, he makes mention of it below in sections 124 and 128, interpreting its spiritual significance in the latter.

offspring will be aliens in a land that is not their own, and they will serve its people, who will afflict them for four hundred years. But that nation which they serve I will judge, and afterwards they will come forth to this place with many possessions. As for you, you will go to your fathers in peace and be buried at a good old age. In the fourth generation they will come back here, for the sins of the Amorites have not yet reached their full measure, even till now." When the sun was about to set, there was a flame, and behold, a smoking furnace and fiery torches, which passed between those [120] divided pieces.²⁷

What this event is all about, the one who is keen to learn will examine, and will take pains to investigate the manner in which the oath was made. What are the divided pieces meant to indicate? What of the flight of the birds and their gathering upon them? What about Abraham sitting with the pieces? What of the flame passing between them? So now we will offer an explanation.

4. For the Chaldeans, passing through the middle of animals that were cut in two was a necessary requirement for making an oath. It was as if to declare through what was being enacted: "May I not become like these." Since Abraham was of the Chaldean race, and had only recently come out from that place, the Master of all instructed him by way of accommodation to perform these customs pertaining to the oath, at the same time finely weaving in the mystery of Christ through the animals that were sacrificed.

When Abraham spread out the pieces upon the ground, it was as though God were about to proceed in between them. *Many birds*, it says, *gathered upon them, so Abraham sat down with the pieces*. This means that he prepared himself and kept guard in order that no harm might be done, and that those things arranged for making the oath might not become food for unclean birds. Then it says, *Around the time the sun was setting, a trance and dread fell upon Abraham*. Again, how this might be understood, I shall explain as far as is possible. It is helpful and wholly unobjectionable to assume that it was also a custom for the Chaldeans to observe closely the flight of birds. And so by way of accommodation the God of all permitted some things which he knew to be a custom for certain people, in order to give instruc-

27. Gn 15.7-17.

tion about what was coming in the future. Now when the birds had gathered upon the pieces, the divine Abraham was fearful,²⁸ having perhaps some notion of what this sign pointed to. For those most loathsome birds flying down upon the sacrifices seemed to be something bad, a cause of some concern, as it is always the habit of unclean things to devour flesh. Now since he was afraid for his own sake, lest the matter should somehow befall himself, he is freed from any anguish over these things, for it says, "*The birds swooping down will not come upon you.*"²⁹ *But know of a certainty that your offspring will be aliens in a strange land.*" And those wanting to afflict them would be very many, of whom the birds coming down upon the sacrifices were a figure.³⁰ Once they have caused a little distress, however, their punishment will be exacted. So it continues, "*As for you, you will go to your fathers in peace and be buried at a good old age.*"

Then it says, *When the sun was about to set, there was a flame of fire, a furnace, and torches, which passed between those divided pieces.* The Deity here, who brings the oath into effect, is perceived in the form of fire, according to the usage of the Chaldeans. The divine Paul also speaks about the force of the oath, and says, "When God made the promise to Abraham, since he could swear by no one greater, he swore by himself, saying, 'I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply you.'³¹ And having waited patiently, he obtained the promise. For men swear by one greater than themselves, and with them an oath given as confirmation puts an end to all dispute. In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of his purpose, guaranteed it with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge might have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us."³² [121]

5. It was most especially by way of accommodation that God

28. Var. add "extremely."

29. This first sentence is not taken, of course, directly from the text of Genesis, but is part of Cyril's interpretation, understanding the birds to represent the nation that would later oppress Abraham's descendants.

30. Or "type."

31. Gn 22.17.

32. Heb 6.13-18.

made the promise and, even though he did not know how to tell a lie, bound himself by oath. This was, as the divine Paul writes, in order that we might have “strong encouragement,” one which totally surpasses all limitations so that we no longer have any doubts.

Now turning our discussion for a moment to what happened earlier,³³ while Hagar was bearing Ishmael, Sarah was troubled, not being able, one would suppose, to endure the boasting and unrestrained haughtiness of the home-born servant over the fact that she was pregnant. Sarah therefore drove her out of the home, and commanded her to go wherever she might wish, while her legal spouse, Abraham, permitted her to do this. Yet, as the sacred Scripture says, *An angel of the Lord God found her by the spring of water in the wilderness on the way to Shur. And the angel of the Lord said to her, “Hagar, maidservant of Sarah, where have you come from, and where are you going?” She replied, “I am running away from my mistress, Sarah.” Then the angel of the Lord said to her, “Go back to your mistress, and submit to her authority.”*³⁴ So Hagar went back and submitted to a yoke of servitude.

God then gave Abraham the law of circumcision, saying, *“As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. And this is the covenant that you shall keep between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations. Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it will be a sign of the covenant between me and you. Throughout your generations every male child among you shall be circumcised when he is eight days old, including the one who is home-born and the one who has been bought with money from any son of a foreigner who is not of your offspring. Whether born in your house or bought with money, he must be circumcised. My covenant will be upon your flesh as an everlasting covenant. But an uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin on the eighth day, that person shall be utterly destroyed from among his people because he has rejected my covenant.”*³⁵ As it was

33. Cyril is mistaken. The events he here refers to in fact happened later than the passage he has been discussing (Gn 15).

34. Gn 16.7–9.

35. Gn 17.9–14.

necessary to submit to the laws of God, the divine Abraham was circumcised with all his household. He circumcised the others also, including Ishmael.

Then the son of the free woman was eventually born, that is, Isaac. And what happened after this? It was intolerable that the illegitimate son, Ishmael, should be mocking Isaac around the home when he ought, one might suppose, to have shown him exceptional honor. For it says, *Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, who was born to Abraham, making fun of Isaac her son.*³⁶ Then she came to Abraham, in tears no doubt, and said, *"Drive out this maidservant and her son, for the son of this maidservant shall not receive an inheritance along with my son, Isaac."*³⁷

This matter regarding his son, it says, was the cause of considerable distress to Abraham: *Then God said to Abraham, "Let not this matter concerning the son and the maidservant distress you. Whatever Sarah tells you, listen [124] to her, because it is in Isaac that your offspring will be named. And the son of this maidservant I will make into a great nation, because he is your offspring."* So Abraham arose early in the morning, took some loaves of bread and a skin of water, and gave them to Hagar. Then he put the child upon her shoulder and sent her away. Going off, she wandered about in the wilderness near the Well of the Oath.³⁸ When the water from the skin was all gone, she placed the child under a fir tree, then went and sat down opposite him about the distance of a bowshot away. She said, *"I cannot watch my child die,"* and so she sat opposite him. The child cried out and wept. God heard the voice of the child coming from the place where he was, and an angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, *"What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid, for God has heard the voice of your child coming from the place where he is. Get up, take the child, and hold him in your hands."* Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of fresh water.³⁹ So she went and filled up the skin with water and gave the child a drink. And God was with the child as he grew up.⁴⁰

The divine Abraham, being overcome by the natural law of

36. Gn 21.9.

37. Gn 21.10.

38. That is, Beersheba.

39. Lit. "living water."

40. Gn 21.12-20.

fatherly love, changed his mind about Ishmael. But when the Deity addressed him in an oracle, telling him to devote himself to Isaac alone as the one to whom the promise pertained, Abraham dismissed Hagar and ordered her, together with the child, to leave the home of her mistress. In this the law was foreshowing a type of the mystery regarding Christ.

6. It is necessary that we should return to our original discussion. For in these matters one may see most readily that what comes through Christ is older than what appears in the law. Justification by faith is revealed even earlier than the circumcision of the flesh. For circumcision, according to what the most-wise Paul says, was given to Abraham as a sign of the faith he had when uncircumcised.

Now the blessed Abraham was troubled, because he had not become the father of a free child. Though he had a son from the Egyptian woman, Hagar, he remained disheartened, reckoning that to have an illegitimate offspring rather than one that was free was the same as being childless. But when he received the promises concerning a genuine child, namely Isaac, he plainly heard that he would be the father of a countless number of nations, and believing this he was justified. Besides this, Abraham would take possession of the land that God had shown him. *"For to you,"* he said, *"I will give this land."*⁴¹ To be sure of this, he entreated God and asked, *"Master, how shall I know that I will inherit it?"*⁴² Then God commanded him to prepare the pieces, the three-year-old heifer, with the goat and the ram, and the turtledove and the dove. Abraham cut the four-legged animals into two, and placed them opposite one another, that is, in a row. The birds, however, he did not cut in two. He also drove away the birds of prey wanting to consume them. And late in the evening, when the sun was setting, in a form of fire God passed through the pieces. What kind of spiritual meaning we might assign to these things, we shall speak of as we are able.

7. Now Israel according to the flesh was a first son, as it were, to the God of all, for it says, "Israel is [125] my firstborn son,"⁴³

41. Cf. Gn 13.15; 15.7; 17.8; 24.7.

42. Gn 15.8.

43. Ex 4.22.

though one that was redeemed from slavery and from Egypt. But God did not think Israel fit to be counted among his children (for it is his nature to love what is free and genuine). Rather, he looked for a pleasing people, that is, a people that come into being through faith in Christ according to the promise, in whom they have also become, in the wake of the divine Abraham, fathers of many nations. For they have inherited that glory such as was not found in Israel according to the flesh, but in those who have been saved through faith from among the nations. Paul also bears witness to this when he writes, "For the promise to Abraham, that he would be heir of the world, was not through law, but through the righteousness of faith."⁴⁴ We who came to believe when uncircumcised lay claim to Abraham as our father, and we are justified by God in the same way as he was.

Paul, an expert in the law, makes the divine mystery especially clear to us. For he writes to the Galatians, rebuking them for going back to the law after the perfection in Christ had come, saying, "Tell me, you who wish to be under the law, do you not listen to the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one from a maidservant, and the other from a free woman. The one from the maidservant was born according to the flesh, while the one from the free woman was born through the promise. These things are an allegory. The two women are the two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, who gives birth to children for slavery; this is Hagar. Now Sinai is a mountain in Arabia. This corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. The Jerusalem from above is free, and she is our mother. For it is written, 'Rejoice, O barren one, who bears no children. Cry out and shout, you who are not in labor; for the children of the desolate women are more than those of the woman who has a husband.'⁴⁵ Now we, brothers, are children of the promise, as Isaac was. But just as at that time the one who was born according to the flesh persecuted the one born according to the Spirit, so it is now also. But what does the Scripture say? 'Drive out the maidservant and her son, for the

44. Rom 4.13.

45. Is 54.1.

son of the maidservant shall not receive an inheritance along with the son of the free woman.⁴⁶ Now we, brothers, are not children of the maidservant, but of the free woman. For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.”⁴⁷

You see, then, how he plainly says that Hagar and Sarah are representations of two covenants. The maidservant represents the mother of the Jews, that is, the Jerusalem upon earth, since she is in subjection to the law of bondage and is not endowed with a free spirit. As for the first and free woman, Sarah, the one whose name may be translated as “princess,” he says she is a figure that applies to the Jerusalem on high. He also clearly affirms that she has become the mother of those justified by faith, who have been called through the promises of God so as to be children of Abraham. “For we,” it says, “are children of the promise, as Isaac was.” We were set free in Christ, through whom and in whom we are richly blessed with the divine Spirit from above. We have been assigned a place among the children of God, and “we cry out Abba, Father.”⁴⁸ We have also become heirs [128] of the good things promised to the saints, God having bound himself, so to speak, in swearing an oath “by himself.” For the Son, whom the mystery concerns, was introduced with the oath of the Father. It is the custom of the Father to swear, as it were, according to his own power, which is the Son. This is what it means to swear by himself, seeing that the Son is not another beside the Father, that is, as far as the question of essence⁴⁹ and the identity of their deity is concerned.

So too the divine Moses, when he portrayed to us God swearing an oath, very plainly represented him as saying, “I will raise my hand up to heaven, and swear by my right hand.”⁵⁰ Now the right hand of God the Father is the Son, by means of whom he prevails over all things and, as it were, has a hold on everything. Moreover, as is fitting for one who is God, the Son performs

46. Gn 21.10.

47. Gal 4.21–5.1.

48. Rom 8.15.

49. Or “being.”

50. Dt 32.40.

the task of calling things that do not exist into being, and keeps things that already exist well-ordered.

Surely then, in the matter of the oath for confirming the faith of those who would inherit the promises, the mystery of our Savior was presented. Christ was further pictured in the heifer, the goat, and the ram, and in the two birds, the turtle-dove and the dove. And how this matter might be understood, I will now explain as much as the opportunity allows.

8. It is evident that, owing to its great strength and invincibility in a fight, a young bull serves on occasion as a fitting likeness to Christ's deity. At other times, with respect to his human nature, and because he is under law, he is termed a heifer. It is always the case that the female is the lesser and secondary, while the male is the ruler and preeminent. For the Son is far above all creation, and he bears a nature and a glory of such incomparable excellence that far surpasses those of created things, coming from the highest possible source,⁵¹ namely the Father and God of all. When he came as one of us, he was reckoned as being under the authority of the law. He therefore said, "I have not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it."⁵² And we shall refer this, if we wish to understand correctly, to the matter of his emptying himself.⁵³ For this reason, Christ is a heifer, fulfilling the figure of the law of Moses, as the law defines with regard to him.

He is also compared to a goat. For what reason?⁵⁴ Because he offered himself for our sins, according to the Scriptures. The he-goat was a sacrifice for sin according to the law.⁵⁵

He is also likened to a ram, on account of his leading the spiritual sheep. For Christ is the one leader over us, and "we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand," as it is written.⁵⁶ When, having emptied himself, he was made in all respects like his brothers, that is, like us, he is described as a

51. Lit. "root."

52. Mt 5.17.

53. *kenōsis*.

54. Var. "For what sin?"

55. Cf. Lv 4.28.

56. Ps 95.7 (94.7 LXX).

ram, meaning one who leads, for rams are always the leaders of the flock.

So then, Christ is a heifer, since he was under the law; he is also a goat, as being a sacrifice for sin; and he is a ram, since he is one who leads.

Now we should want to follow in his footsteps, and do so eagerly. We will then be in good pasture, and in a fertile place, as the prophet says,⁵⁷ and we will dine in sacred courts. For he will cause us to inhabit the heavenly dwellings, he himself being, as it were, both a ram and chief shepherd. As [129] one of us he is under the law and yet also over the law, being himself God, our whole justification, although “he was counted with the transgressors,”⁵⁸ and endured being slain for our sakes.

He is also pictured as a turtledove and a dove. For he is the unique spiritual turtledove that sings out, the truly eloquent bird who is from heaven above, who has summoned everyone under heaven through the proclamation of the gospel, to whom also the bride, that is, the church of the nations, called out, “Show me your face and let me hear your voice, because your voice is pleasant and your face is beautiful.”⁵⁹ He is the pure, innocent⁶⁰ dove, which is without deceit, for as it is written, “no deceit was found in his mouth.”⁶¹

He is likewise the three-year-old heifer as well as the other animals, for he is the all-perfect Lord, the age of the animals beautifully showing forth the perfection in deity of the Only-Begotten.

The animals were separated, for they were cut into two pieces. Yet the two birds, remember, were not cut up. And what does this mean? The Only-Begotten Word of God became flesh, as if he were divided in two, and the matter we have to consider concerning him extends into two parts. For on the one hand we perceive his divine and ineffable generation from the Father, while on the other we speak also of the mystery of his Incar-

57. Probably alluding to Ezek 34.14; cf. also Is 5.1.

58. Is 53.12.

59. Song 2.14.

60. Var. add “truly.”

61. Is 53.9.

nation. This is the profundity of the divine economy—we both make separate and take as one, thereby imparting knowledge to those who do not understand this mystery. Although our consideration of him has become twofold, however, he himself is wholly one, not capable of being divided into two following his union with flesh.⁶² Nor can he be separated into two sons, for Christ is one and undivided. The fact that the birds were not divided would also be a distinct figure of this very thing, for it says, “*Do not cut the birds in two.*” That he is from the earth on account of his humanity was in a way signified by means of the young cow, the goat, and the ram. That he is also from heaven above on account of his being God is understood by means of the birds. Though Christ willingly endured being slain for us, his flesh, as it is written, “did not see corruption,”⁶³ and according to what the psalmist says, “The enemy will have no advantage over him, and the son of lawlessness will not harm him any more.”⁶⁴ Again, the divine Abraham very plainly indicates this in a figure, when he drives away the birds of prey wanting to consume⁶⁵ the divided pieces.

The harsh treatment later to be experienced in Egypt by those descended from Abraham,⁶⁶ that is, Israel, was announced to him ahead of time, as was their incredible deliverance. It says, *Around the time the sun was setting, a smoking fiery furnace, and fiery torches, passed between the divided pieces.* For the law of Moses⁶⁷ brought to light matters relating to the promise before they happened, that is, the slavery of the Israelites and their deliverance, presenting far-off events to those who heard the account.

Now it was in the latter times of the world, which was as though it were towards evening, that “the Word became flesh.”⁶⁸ For I believe that it was he, and none other, who was [132] that

62. Var. add “With regard to the hypostasis, he cannot be separated . . .”

63. Ps 16.10 (15.10 LXX).

64. Ps 89.22 (88.23 LXX).

65. Here Cyril uses the verb cognate to the noun translated “corruption” in the foregoing citation from Ps 16.

66. Lit. “those of his blood.”

67. By this phrase Cyril here means the Pentateuch rather than the Mosaic law given at Sinai.

68. Jn 1.14.

divine and ineffable Being⁶⁹ that passed between the pieces in the form of fire. *There was*, it says, *a flame of fire, a fiery furnace, and fiery torches*. For the sacred mystery of the Incarnation has truly occurred, which, for those choosing to disobey and who turn aside to unrestrained behavior, is like a furnace and a flame, and the unendurable last judgment of all. So with regard to the Israelites who ignorantly inveighed against the mystery of Christ, who were inclined to be antagonistic and boastful, David said to him who is Father and God of all, "You will make them like a fiery furnace at the time of your presence, Lord; in your wrath you will trouble them, and fire will consume them."⁷⁰ The time of the Father's presence is reasonably understood as the time of the Incarnation, seeing that the Son is both the presence and image of God the Father. He is a fierce flame and a furnace to those who wish to reject the mystery of the Incarnation of the Only-Begotten. Yet to those who acknowledge his appearing, he is, as it is written, "a lamp shining in the darkness,"⁷¹ which makes the earthy, devilish gloom⁷² recede and does not permit the many who worship him to stumble by falling into sin.

Thus God the Father put forward⁷³ the Son for us, saying through the mouth of Isaiah, "For Zion's sake, I will not be silent, and for the sake of Jerusalem I will not rest, until my righteousness goes forth like light, and my salvation burns like torches."⁷⁴ For the Son has become both our salvation and righteousness from God the Father. Since it is true that we are justified in him, overcoming also the death that long ago subjected us to its dominion, we are again restored to incorruption and transformed into that very nature which we had in the beginning.

9. That it was necessary, once Emmanuel had appeared and his mystery had been manifested in the world, for the types of the Mosaic ministration to be removed and to give way to the

69. *phusis*.

70. Ps 21.9 (20.10 LXX).

71. Cf. Jn 1.5.

72. Lit. "mist."

73. Or "dedicated."

74. Is 62.1.

teachings of the gospel, the better and more perfect ordinance, is again foreshadowed in an earthy type. And what is this type I will speak of? As Sarah had not borne any children, while Hagar was pregnant with Ishmael she was seen to hold the free woman in contempt. Sarah could not bear this haughtiness and began to mistreat the Egyptian woman. So Hagar ran away from home and wandered about in the wilderness. An angel from heaven asked her where she was going and where she had come from. *She answered, "I am running away from my mistress, Sarah."* Then what did the divine angel say? *"Go back to your mistress, and submit to her authority."*⁷⁵

Foreshown here is the ministration of the law laboring to give birth to Israel.⁷⁶ This was a servant, for in it there was no spirit of freedom. Before the new teaching of the gospel, it conceived, as it were, the people who had come out of Egypt. It therefore became high-minded and persecuted those in Christ, and greatly exalting itself against the divine oracles of the gospel, in numerous ways it stood condemned. For the synagogue of the Jews censured the holy apostles, expressly saying, "We strictly commanded you not [133] to teach in this name, and look, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching!"⁷⁷

You see how the Egyptian woman exalted herself against Sarah, how the serving girl was emboldened against the free woman. Yet in time she was overcome and she ran away, receiving after a fashion the penalty of her unrestrained behavior.⁷⁸ She was then commanded, through what the angel said, not to reject the free woman, that is, the teaching that leads to the dignity of freedom, but rather to submit to her authority.

The ministration of the law, conducted through figures and types, is in a way a servant of the gospel teachings, dimly portraying in itself the beauty of the truth. The law that was appointed long ago by Moses through angels, also through the voice of an

75. Gn 16.8-9.

76. Since the noun *latreia* ("service," "worship," "ministration," "cultus") is feminine, Cyril is able at one and the same time to talk about both the servant woman Hagar and the ministration of the Mosaic law. In the following sentences, therefore, "it" could equally well be read as "she."

77. Acts 5.28.

78. Or "in a way incurring the penalty of banishment."

angel is ordered to submit to the oracles given through Christ, and to bow,⁷⁹ even if unwillingly, to the free woman. This, I believe, is how we are to understand Hagar's submission to Sarah. It ought also to be remembered that the divine Paul takes these women as two covenants, one bearing children for slavery, corresponding to the present Jerusalem,⁸⁰ and the other bearing children for the dignity of freedom, which is Sarah.

The blessed Abraham was evidently taught that when Christ came, the time of circumcision in the Spirit⁸¹ would assuredly come with him. God gave the law that circumcision should be carried out, foreshowing, I believe, spiritual things through fleshly figures. Now it says, *"every male shall be circumcised."*⁸² And for this reason he metes out ruin and destruction as the punishment for neglecting to obey, for it said that *"an uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin on the eighth day, that person shall be utterly destroyed from among his people"*⁸³ *because he has rejected my covenant.*⁸⁴

You see that circumcision in the flesh is a type that foreshows circumcision in spirit and truth. It was performed on the eighth day, the same as when Christ came back to life from the dead. And it was the occasion of partaking of the Holy Spirit and receiving circumcision in him, not one that causes pain to the flesh, but which purifies the spirit, not removing the filth of the body, but freeing us from diseases of the soul.

When Christ came back to life, having annulled the power of death, then he also put within the holy disciples the firstfruits, as it were, of the Holy Spirit. It says that he breathed upon them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."⁸⁵ The meaning of this the most-wise John also understands, saying, "For the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus had not yet been glorified."⁸⁶ Christ was indeed glorified when he rose from the dead,

79. Var. "and to submit, even if unwillingly, to the call of the free woman."

80. Var. add "with her children" (cf. Gal 4.25).

81. Or "in spirit."

82. Gn 17.10.

83. Var. "from that place."

84. Gn 17.14.

85. Jn 20.22.

86. Jn 7.39.

which was on the eighth day. Consequently, the Spirit was also conveyed to us, and in him we have been circumcised with a spiritual circumcision performed without hands. This, in fact, is the kind of circumcision that is pleasing to God. Therefore, the divine Paul says in a certain place, "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. Rather, he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. Such a person's praise is not from men, but from God."⁸⁷

10. The ministration under the law being of no more effect, and the new ministration in Christ now being in force, those [136] who are a people through faith have now been displayed. They have been incorporated among the children of the free woman, who do not have a servile spirit (for they cry out, "Abba, Father"). Accordingly, the time came for the congregation and synagogue of the Jews to be sent away, and to be disinherited as the people of the promise. It is, however, also the case that in due course they will repent and be accepted. They will obtain mercy from the Father above, as they acknowledge the Savior and Redeemer of all. This too the sacred Scripture reveals.

Now the two boys, Isaac and Ishmael, were playing about, leaping after one another. Chasing is, I suppose, a kind of childish amusement. Ishmael is said to be the one who was chasing, and Isaac is depicted as the one running away. The free woman, Sarah, however, felt indignant at this. So she said to the divine Abraham, "*Drive out this maidservant and her son, for the son of this maidservant shall not receive an inheritance along with my son, Isaac.*"⁸⁸ The situation indeed sounded troublesome⁸⁹ to Abraham. Yet he heard from God that he should be persuaded by the words of Sarah. So, having supplied Hagar with loaves of bread and water, he commanded her to take the child and leave the home of her mistress. Hagar went off distraught and in tears, and wandered about in the wilderness. But when the life of the child was in danger and he was crying out, it says that

87. Rom 2.28–29.

88. Gn 21.10.

89. Var. "harsh."

*God opened Hagar's eyes, and she saw a well of fresh water and gave the boy a drink.*⁹⁰

Note, then, how even the playing of children can be valuable to some degree for understanding the mystery, for Ishmael pursued Isaac.⁹¹ The fact that Ishmael, the son of the maidservant, would persecute the son of the free woman, namely the people which is in Christ through faith, the blessed Paul explained with reference to Ishmael and Isaac. He said, "But just as at that time the one who was born according to the flesh persecuted the one born according to the Spirit, so it is now also."⁹² Since Ishmael was hostile towards the children of the free woman, the synagogue of the Jews has now been sent away, with bread and water as its paltry sustenance. This latter indicates, as it were, that knowledge and piety were given in measure, by means of which it was not at all possible that the Jews should go off and die out completely. For God in a certain place said that he had left a remnant in Israel, a few offspring who showed some virtue with respect to the law: "And I will be a little sanctuary for them in the countries where they go."⁹³ He says he would become "a little sanctuary" for the people of Israel after their dispersion among the nations. On account of the lack of strength on the part of the Jews which made them unable fully to obey the law given through Moses, they observed only a very few things, like circumcision in the flesh perhaps, and resting on the Sabbath. So then, by water and loaves of bread she who was born for slavery, that is, the synagogue of the Jews, was just barely sustained.

Abraham took it very hard when Hagar ran away, though he had dismissed her at God's command. In a similar way, when Israel fell away it was a cause of sorrow to [137] the holy apostles and evangelists. These were separated from Israel, not willingly, but because of God's purpose and for the love of Christ. The divine Paul therefore writes, "It is the cause of great sorrow to me and of unceasing pain in my heart. For I could wish that

90. Gn 21.19.

91. The verb here translated as "pursue" is identical to that translated "chase" a few sentences earlier and "persecute" in the following sentence.

92. Gal 4.29.

93. Ezek 11.16.

I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites."⁹⁴

When the mother of the Jews was sent away, she wandered for a long time, and she was even in danger of perishing completely. If, however, her offspring were eventually to cry out earnestly to God, they will be shown complete and utter mercy.⁹⁵ For he will open the eyes of their understanding, and they too will see the fountain of living water,⁹⁶ that is, Christ. And so drinking, they will live through him. Being washed, they too will be made clean, as the prophet says.⁹⁷ That Christ is the fountain of life, the psalmist makes very clear when he says to God the Father in heaven, "How you have multiplied your mercy, O God! The sons of men will have hope in the shadow of your wings. They will drink from the abundance of your house, and you will give them drink from the river of your delights, for with you is the fountain of life."⁹⁸ This is none other than Christ, through whom and with whom be glory and power to God the Father, together with the holy, consubstantial, life-giving Spirit, for ever and ever without end. Amen.

Concerning Abraham and Isaac

1. Now after these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham, Abraham," and he said, "Here I am." God said, "Take your beloved son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the hill country, and offer him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, which I will tell you about." Such were the instructions given by God. So without delay, that righteous man saddled his donkey, as it is written, and choosing just two of his household servants to accompany him, he took his beloved son and set off to perform the sacrifice.⁹⁹

94. Rom 9.2-3.

95. Here Cyril switches from the feminine singular, speaking of Israel's mother, to the masculine plural, "they," meaning the Israelites descended from her.

96. "of living water": *zôntos hudatos*, the same words translated as "fresh water" above, pp. 140 and 151.

97. Cf. Is 1.16.

98. Ps 36.7-9 (35.8-10 LXX).

99. Cf. Gn 22.1-3.

When he arrived at the sacred place on the third day, he said to the servants, “*Stay here with the donkey, while the boy and I go over there. We will worship, then come back to you.*” Placing the wood for the burnt offering upon his son, he told him to go ahead while he followed.¹⁰⁰

When the boy asked his father, “*Here is the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?*” Abraham answered, “*God will provide for himself a lamb for the burnt offering, my child.*” Having constructed the divine altar, he piled up the wood. Then, after binding the boy upon it and taking up the knife, the voice of an angel stopped him, telling him that he should not slay the boy, as God knew that he had the right intention.¹⁰¹

Then that righteous man, seeing a ram with horns caught in a thornbush,¹⁰² completed the sacrifice and offered it up instead of the boy. He then went down [140] to the servants, bringing his son safely back to them.¹⁰³

Cutting short the full extent of the literal sense, we shall bring together in a few words what is most useful for showing that the mystery regarding our Savior is prefigured through these matters. Again we do not hesitate to explain this as it lies within our power to do so. If one does not give an account of everything present in the literal sense of the narratives, he ought not be blamed, for the spiritual meaning is often hidden within a large amount of literal. This can be likened to the most fragrant flowers in the meadows, which are wrapped around with ordinary leaves on the outside. If one cuts them open, he will find and lay bare what is good and profitable. So we now come to the figurative¹⁰⁴ meaning.

2. When the blessed Abraham was tested and commanded to sacrifice his beloved son, it was doubtless the cause of some distress, since he was the one who fathered him. Though it was as if his natural affection had been pierced by a hot sting, he nevertheless gave priority to the good that would come from

100. Cf. Gn 22.4–6.

101. Cf. Gn 22.7–12.

102. Cyril follows the LXX in calling this bush a *sabek*, a transliteration of the Hebrew term appearing in Gn 22.13 meaning “thicket.”

103. Cf. Gn 22.13, 19.

104. Or “allegorical.”

the matter. The same thing is revealed to us very clearly in those words spoken by the Savior, "For God so loved the world that he gave his Only-Begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish, but have eternal life."¹⁰⁵ For if one needs to say something in human terms to show distinctly what this means, God the Father was in a way greatly troubled in sending the Son to die on our account, even though he knew he¹⁰⁶ would suffer none of the pains, since as God he was impassible. Intending, however, something advantageous to come from his death, namely the salvation and life of all, the affection appropriate to a father was set aside.

Paul also marveled at him, saying, "who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up on behalf of us all."¹⁰⁷ In what exactly does the wonder of the love of God the Father for us consist, except that he was pleased to bear the giving up of his own Son for us who were unwilling? For in such a way Paul persuades us to understand the words "he did not spare." Therefore, such words were never spoken with reference to just anybody, but only to those endeavoring to accomplish some great task, as in "Extend your cords, and strengthen your stakes; spread out further to the right and to the left," and "Fix your stakes, do not spare."¹⁰⁸ And again, "Deliver those who are being led away to death, and rescue those who are to be slain; do not hold back."¹⁰⁹ And such a thing, in the words "*Take your beloved son,*" would also be said to us.

As for the two servants accompanying the old man on the three-day journey, these are a figure of the two peoples called to servitude through the law, that is to say, the people of Israel and the people of Judah. These were meant to follow only the decrees of God the Father, as those servants followed Abraham. Yet they did not at all perceive the Son through whom all things exist, nor did they recognize the Father's heir, whose most beau-

105. Jn 3.16.

106. "he": By this pronoun Cyril clearly means the Father.

107. Rom 8.32.

108. Is 54.2-3. In this and the following citation, "do not spare" has, of course, the sense of "do not exercise restraint."

109. Prv 24.11.

tiful image was presented to us by the little Isaac lying in the bosom of his own father, not yet bearing the authority appropriate to the master of the house. For the all-perfect Son in fact was and is [141] eternally Lord and God.

What was not evident to all, and especially to the profane Jews, who only see fleshly things, was that the little child was to be considered as a certain somebody. In a way knowledge concerning him exists in a measure proportionate to the understanding that people have. This knowledge is found to be little among the little, but great among the great. At any rate, the prophets indeed do say, "He is great and awesome to all those that are around him,"¹¹⁰ that is, those who have come near to him by means of considerable mental application.¹¹¹ Paul also labored with certain people "until Christ be formed in them,"¹¹² which is to say, until his great and remarkable divine characteristics were gradually molded into their minds.

The fact that the servants followed until the third day and were not permitted to go up to the high and sacred land, but were rather instructed to stay with the donkey, suggests the two peoples following God through the law, which they continue to do until the third age, that is, the last, when Christ was manifested to us. For the whole age is divided into three epochs, namely that which is passed, that which is present, and that which is to come. The end, therefore, comes in the third. The divine Scripture says that Christ came in the final age of the world. So Israel, having followed after God through the law until the time of the coming of our Savior, did not wish to follow Christ through faith, to follow him who went up to his death on behalf of all, but rather they were prevented on account of their many sins. In fact, "a hardening has come upon part of Israel,"¹¹³ which is signified through the donkey that was then present with the servants. For the donkey is a symbol of their final irrationality, hardening being the offspring of irrationality.

The separation of the servants and the departure of the fa-

110. Ps 89.7 (88.8 LXX).

111. Or "prudence."

112. Gal 4.19.

113. Rom 11.25.

ther with the son, to speak of it once again (for it says, "*The boy and I will go over there. We will worship, then come back to you*"), signifies the temporary withdrawal of God from the people of Israel and his future return to them at the completion of the age, which is accomplished through their coming to faith in Christ. For it says, "when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, then all Israel will be saved."¹¹⁴

Now the blessed Abraham did not openly say that he would go and sacrifice his son, but stated his intention with the words "*We will go over there.*" This may be taken as a clear indication that the mystery of Christ would not be believed by the Jewish people. This explanation concerning the matter seems true to us. For when we see Jesus speaking to the Jews, it is in parables and figures, yet when speaking to his own disciples, he says, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables."¹¹⁵

As for the boy, Isaac, the wood for the burnt offering was laid upon him by his father, and he carried it until he came to the place where the sacrifice would be made. So Christ, carrying¹¹⁶ his own cross upon his shoulder, suffered outside the gate [144]. It was not by human strength that he was forced to suffer, but it was of his own will and the will of God the Father, as he said to Pontius Pilate, "You would have no authority over me unless it had been given you from above."¹¹⁷

Isaac, having the wood placed upon him, is led away to suffering and death. Yet it is the ram given by God that is offered up as the sacrifice. For the Word was in reality of the substance of God the Father, shining radiantly in his own temple, that which was supplied through the Virgin, and which was nailed to the tree. Although as God he was impassible and immortal, he took himself away to suffering and death, and through his own body he offered up a pleasing aroma to God the Father. He himself, therefore, is said to have been accepted by the Father, in accordance with what is written in the Psalms, as though it were spo-

¹¹⁴. Cf. Rom 11.25b-26a.

¹¹⁵. Lk 8.10.

¹¹⁶. Var. "having."

¹¹⁷. Jn 19.11.

ken by him: “Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but you have prepared a body for me; burnt offerings and sin offerings did not please you. Then I said, ‘Behold, I come; in the scroll’¹¹⁸ of the book it is written concerning me. I desired to do¹¹⁹ your will.”¹²⁰ That the matters arising out of the literal sense presented to us here make a most beautiful¹²¹ reference to Christ he himself testifies when he says, “in the scroll of the book it is written concerning me.” Now the book is the whole of that eminently wise, five-part writing of Moses. The head and beginning of the whole book is that which is called Genesis, in which these things are written concerning Christ. The word “head” in the divine Scriptures also indicates the beginning. That you might be fully convinced of this, take note of what Paul says: “the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.”¹²² Christ is the beginning of man as the one who brings him into being out of non-being. Then man is the beginning of woman on account of what was said and what was actually done—“She shall be called woman, because she was taken out of her husband.”¹²³ God is said to be the beginning of Christ since the Son is from him with regard to his nature. So he who is without beginning has the one who has begotten him as his beginning, while at the same time he coexists eternally with him.

3. In my opinion, therefore, it is best to take the words of the literal account as applying to the mystery of Christ. Yet it is necessary, I believe, that we hold the divine Abraham in great wonder and with the highest praise, and that we declare his manifest glory to one and all. Furthermore, we ought to give careful attention to the depth of God’s wisdom. For the divine Abraham was tested, though God was not ignorant of what

118. The word *kephalis*, here translated “scroll,” is a diminutive form of *kephalē*, “head,” and so may also have the sense of “little head.” In what follows Cyril plays upon the relationship between these two terms.

119. Var. add “O God.”

120. Ps 40.6–8 (39.7–9 LXX).

121. Or “most excellent.”

122. 1 Cor 11.3.

123. Gn 2.22.

would happen.¹²⁴ Indeed, nothing is beyond the notice of the mind that knows everything. Therefore, he said, "Who is this that hides counsel from me, and confines words in his heart, thinking to conceal them from me?"¹²⁵ And through the mouth of Isaiah he said, "For I am God, and there is no other beside me, who declares the latter things before they come to pass, and they are completely fulfilled."¹²⁶ Consequently, it would be absolutely astounding and most improper if we should fail to understand the matter correctly by supposing that the God of all did not know what would happen, and that this was his reason for testing Abraham. It was necessary, however, [145] for that righteous man to have such splendid repute not in the knowledge of God only, but also for his most excellent glory to be magnified and for all to know that through this act of testing, his glory is attested as being above all virtues. It was necessary, then, for the extent of his obedience also to be proclaimed through the sacred Scriptures, and so the account given in the divine oracles is lengthy, lacking nothing.

Abraham came to this event with determination and willingness, as though regarding the son he loved as of no account, nor did he fear the charge of being a child-murderer. Even more remarkable is the fact that by means of this child he expected to become the father of many nations. Yet he knew that God had not lied in saying this. So he took the child away to be sacrificed, not doubting the promises but committing them into the hand¹²⁷ of the Master, believing that he knew how to fulfill the oath he had sworn.¹²⁸

Furthermore, this matter was not without profit for Abraham, even though the trial brought him so much grief. For by what was about to happen he was being taught the astounding wonder of the resurrection of the dead, which surpasses all reason, and, in addition to this, the great and noble mystery of the Incarnation of the Only-Begotten. The divine Paul states,

124. Var. "of the mystery."

125. Jb 38.2.

126. Is 46.9-10.

127. Lit. "power."

128. Var. "how to fulfill the things mentioned."

"By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered his only-begotten son, though he had been told, 'In Isaac your offspring will be named.'¹²⁹ He reckoned that God was able even to raise someone from the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive him back from death."¹³⁰ And so God the Father would in due course show forth Abraham to be the root and origin of many thousands of Gentiles, when Emmanuel died for the world.

So by means of this testing, that righteous man was profitably taught the extraordinary and ineffable love for us of God the Father, "who did not spare his own Son," as we said earlier, "but gave him up on behalf of us all," who have been justified by faith and are reckoned as children of our forefather Abraham.

If one must describe things on a human level, I would say that the command of God for Abraham to sacrifice Isaac was burdensome and intolerable to that blessed man. For how do you suppose he was affected when ordered to do this thing? Here was a man who had reached considerable old age, endowed with a single, late-born son, deprived by age of the ability to become the father of any other children, having also a very elderly spouse (for Sarah herself was an old woman), who was commanded to slay without hesitation his much-longed-for son, his only-begotten and much-prayed-for son. How did the old man expect his hand to be able to bring the knife down upon the boy, and thus undertake to commit the pitiable slaughter of his own offspring? Is it not reasonable to suppose that an extremely bitter and turbulent throng of thoughts unbearably ravaged the soul of that righteous man? At one time his natural affection was impelling him, while at another the divine oracle was persuading him, and it was most probably necessary for him to summon forth the unwished-for readiness¹³¹ to obey.

Great indeed, then, is the marvel of that righteous man, and [148] his love of God is beyond all praise. For having bade farewell to the laws of nature, and having trodden down the pangs of the affection he inevitably felt, allowing no earthly

129. Gn 21.12.

130. Heb 11.17-19.

131. Var. "desire."

thing to oppose his love for God, he offered up the spiritual sacrifice. Therefore, he was glorified and was called "the friend of God."¹³² Also, the things he hoped for turned out to be far beyond what was expected. He became, in fact, the father of a countless multitude of nations in Christ, through whom and with whom be glory to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

Concerning Isaac and Rebekah

1. To those who have been justified in Christ, and who enjoy abundant union with him through partaking of the Holy Spirit by the goodwill of the Father, the wise Paul writes, "I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ."¹³³ For the blessed disciples became, as it were, those who summon to the wedding banquet and who lead forth the bride, bringing near those yet far off and joining them to Christ, binding them together in the unity of the Spirit. Though it was God the Father who had raised her up, introduced her, and pledged her to his own Son, Christ will in fact present the church to himself. That the saints,¹³⁴ however, act as go-betweens none would doubt. The divine David foreannounced the mystery to us, when in one passage he said to the church, "Listen, O daughter, consider and incline your ear. Forget your people and your father's house, because the king has desired your beauty. He is your lord, and you will bow down to him."¹³⁵ Paul also agrees, as I just said, that in a way believers are like a bride presented¹³⁶ to Christ.

Yet someone, no less than we do, might further observe the exceedingly sublime and truly remarkable mystery in what follows. It is written that *Abraham was old and advanced in years; and the Lord blessed Abraham in everything. Now Abraham said to the old-*

¹³² Jas 2.23; see also 2 Chr 20.7, Is 41.8.

¹³³ 2 Cor 11.2.

¹³⁴ Here "saints" refers, as the context demands, not to the people of God in general, but to the apostles and prophets.

¹³⁵ Ps 45.10-11 (44.11-12 LXX).

¹³⁶ Var. "betrothed."

*est servant of his household, who had the charge of all his possessions, "Put your hand under my thigh. I adjure you by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you do not take a wife for my son Isaac from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell. But you shall go to the land where I was born, and to my kindred. From there you shall take a wife for my son Isaac."*¹³⁷ So, when Abraham had given these instructions, the servant immediately swore the oath, placing his hand under the thigh of his master. From this it is understood that the oath was made with respect to the entire offspring that would come from Abraham.

Then, loading ten camels with all kinds of choice goods from Abraham, the servant went swiftly to Mesopotamia. Coming to a halt at the city of Nahor, he made the camels rest outside the city beside the well of water; it was towards evening time when women go out to draw water.

On arriving in that place, the servant beseeched God to make the way ahead clear and to show him a healthy and hospitable maiden,¹³⁸ one whose demeanor would show her to be eager for love. *He said, [149] "The young woman to whom I say, 'Dip your waterpot that I may drink,' and who says, 'Drink, and I will also water your camels until they have finished drinking,' let this be the one whom you have prepared for your servant Isaac."*¹³⁹

After a short while there came a beautiful-looking and comely young woman, namely Rebekah. When the servant asked for a drink, she gave it willingly. She also offered to water the camels, and what she offered to do was promptly done. From this the servant concluded that this young woman, and no other, was the one. So, taking bracelets and earrings, he presented them to her. She then made to go home and enjoined him to follow her immediately.

When he came to the house, he was received hospitably. There he gave them a dazzling account of his own master's wealth, adding that he also had a single, beloved son, Isaac, to whom he had given everything, and that the young man was master over it all.

137. Gn 24.1-4.

138. In what follows, "maiden" and "young woman" might also be translated "virgin."

139. Gn 24.14.

When the servant who came for a bride wished to depart together with the young woman, they asked Rebekah if she would go along with the man who had invited her. She welcomed the departure, consenting to it willingly.

Now when Rebekah arrived, Isaac desired to bring her immediately into his home. Thus, although his mother had recently died, he was greatly comforted.

The literal account, then, is of considerable length. Yet we have shortened it as much as possible, and what we have said will suffice. So now let the force of the spiritual meaning come forth in its own ingenious way, and let it once again display the mystery of Christ in a type, which, though yet lying in obscure shadows, nonetheless bears the reality.

2. Abraham did not think it fit to betroth any of the daughters of Canaan to his beloved son, Isaac. Rather, he commanded the servant who belonged to him to set out for the land of idol-worshippers in order to obtain a woman who would be especially suitable for him. For God the Father did not want the synagogue of the Jews to be joined to Christ, who is signified by Isaac.

Isaac was born late in Abraham's life and was beloved. And so in the latter times Christ appeared, and he too is beloved. He is also the cause of delight and rejoicing, which is what the name "Isaac" means.¹⁴⁰

That the Canaanites may be considered a type of Israel should be clear and readily understood from the interpretation of the name, seeing that "Canaanites" means "prepared for humbling."¹⁴¹ For which people was it appropriate that they should experience humbling, or rather that they should have experienced it already, except for the Jews? They have been humbled since they have fallen away from the glory that is in Christ, and have sunk into a whole range of excessive deeds. Accordingly, it was not from Canaan but from Mesopotamia that Isaac's bride came. For, as I said, it was not from the Jews, but

140. The Hebrew name Isaac means "laughter."

141. Cyril here relates the term "Canaanites" to the Hebrew verb *kāna'*, meaning "to humble," "subdue," "bring down."

from the nations that the church is spiritually joined to Christ the Savior.

Moreover, through the will of the Father there are servants, being especially faithful and true, who act as go-betweens. These we understand to be the disciples, who became keepers and stewards of the mysteries concerning Christ as God,¹⁴² having in their hands, so to speak, everything in their master's house. Leaving Judea behind, just as Abraham's servant did Canaan, they went down into a country of idol-worshippers, loaded up, in a sense, with good things from God the Father, having minds full of heavenly wisdom, [152] and gifts given in full measure through the Spirit.

Also observe that the servant of Abraham is unnamed. This is so that the figure representing servanthood might be extended to every faithful and approved disciple.

That servant stopped at a well of water towards evening time. He then entreated God in prayer to grant assistance, wishing to give approval to¹⁴³ the young woman in the matter of drawing water. The divine disciples, as I said, also came to the lands of the nations towards evening, that is, in the latter times of the world, and approved a spiritual maiden by the side of water. This is the church, which is deemed most suitable, which is to say, having the ability to draw forth the life-giving word from the wells of salvation, as it is written.¹⁴⁴ She also does not lack the right ability of mind to be able to supply others too with the things leading to life. For Rebekah gave water to the servant and the camels. The servant, on one hand, may be understood as a type of the people of Israel. For those people who had the law already had a tutor, and though the mystery of Christ may still have been in shadows, they were nevertheless not completely without a guide in this matter. The people of the Gentile nations, on the other hand, were no different from irrational beasts, and so are suitably represented here by the camels. According to the law these animals are impure.¹⁴⁵ Such, then, are

142. Cf. 1 Cor 4.1.

143. Or "test."

144. Cf. Is 12.3.

145. Lit. "unholy." Cf. Lv 11.4.

people who do not yet know God at all¹⁴⁶ or his true nature. The church, therefore, is very capable of watering with the sacred and divine streams¹⁴⁷ both those from among the Jews who come to receive the love that is in Christ and those called out from the Gentiles.

When the disciples saw what kind of young woman the church was, they immediately adorned her with bracelets and placed ornaments in her ears. This means they glorified her wonderful and most splendid obedience, for the adorning of her ears points to her readiness to obey. They undertook for her to be conspicuous by her deeds also, that is, the virtuous actions done by her hands. This, I believe, is what is meant by putting bracelets on her arms.

Abraham's servant related to those in Haran the riches of his master and that he had a single, beloved son as his heir. So the divine disciples instructed the Gentiles in the mysteries, declaring the riches of God the Father, which are hope, life, and sanctification, and they clearly proclaimed that Christ is his one and only true Son with respect to his nature, who has been appointed heir of all things.

The young woman was asked if she was willing to go with the servant, and she immediately indicated that she was. Now the church taken out of the nations is most willing, quite fervent in fact for the love of Christ. The divine David testifies concerning the congregation taken from among the nations when he says, "Your ear is inclined to the willingness of their hearts."¹⁴⁸

When Isaac was united with Rebekah, it says, *he was comforted with regard to his mother*.¹⁴⁹ From this we are to understand that Christ was grieved when the synagogue of the Jews, from which he had been born with respect to his flesh, died, as it were, through unbelief. [153] Yet when he became the bridegroom of the church taken out of the Gentiles, it was as though he ceased that mourning for her. In a certain passage it was said to the church through the mouth of the prophets, "It shall come

146. Var. "are all the people who do not yet know God."

147. Var. "commands."

148. Ps 10.17 (9.38 LXX).

149. Gn 24.67.

to pass that as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall the Lord rejoice over you,”¹⁵⁰ through whom and with whom be glory to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

*Concerning Esau and Jacob, that they stand as a type
of two peoples, the people of Israel and those who
are a people through faith in Christ*

1. *These are the generations of Isaac, the son of Abraham. Now Abraham became the father of Isaac, and Isaac was forty years old when he took as his wife Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Mesopotamia, the sister of Laban the Syrian. Isaac prayed to the Lord concerning Rebekah his wife because she was barren. And God heard him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. Now the babies were jumping around within her, and she said, “Why is this happening to me?” So she went to inquire of the Lord. The Lord said to her, “Two nations are within you, and two peoples will be separated from your womb. One people will have preeminence over the other, and the elder will serve the younger.” Then the time came for Rebekah to give birth, and there were twins in her womb. When the firstborn son emerged, he was red and hairy all over, like an animal skin, so she called his name Esau. After this, his brother came out with his hand holding on to Esau’s heel, so she called his name Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them. So the boys grew up. Esau was a man skilled at hunting, and lived in the open country. Jacob was a simple man, who liked to stay at home. Now Isaac loved Esau, because he liked to eat wild game, but Rebekah loved Jacob. Once Jacob cooked some stew. Esau came in from the field exhausted, and he said to Jacob, “Give me some of that red stew to eat, because I am exhausted.” For this reason his name was called Edom. Jacob said to him, “Sell me your birthright this very day.” Then Esau said, “Behold, I am about to die; what use is this birthright to me?” Jacob said to him, “Swear an oath to me today.” So he swore to him, and Esau sold his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew, and he ate and drank, got up, and went. So Esau despised his birthright.*¹⁵¹

150. Is 62.5.

151. Gn 25.19–34.

God, who does not know how to lie, promised that the divine Abraham would indeed be the father of many nations. He also affirmed that the multitude that would come from him would in all be of a vast quantity, for he says, "*They will be as uncountable as sand and like the stars of the heavens in number.*"¹⁵² Yet such remarkable glory was not limited to Israel only, but extended also to the congregation of the Gentiles. For these latter were invited on the basis of faith, and such are all the more in Isaac, that is to say, of the promise.

The most-wise Paul testifies to this when he writes, "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, announced the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, 'In you all the nations will be blessed.'¹⁵³ [156] So those who are of faith are blessed along with believing Abraham, while all who are of the law of works are under a curse, as it is written, 'Cursed is everybody who does not continue to do everything written in the book of the law.'¹⁵⁴ That nobody is justified before God by the law is evident, for 'the righteous will live by faith.'¹⁵⁵ Yet the law is not of faith, but 'he who does them shall live by them.'¹⁵⁶ He includes here the fact that the things that were promised came to fulfillment, by no means through those instructed in the law, but through those justified by faith.

So when the ordinance given through Moses was introduced as part of the divine economy, the promise was not set aside. Rather, the law gave instruction concerning it, pointing in a certain measure to the calling that was through faith. Further, in exposing the weaknesses of those who had come beforehand, it shows forth how grace through faith and justification in Christ are most needful and indispensable for all.

This is what the divine Paul further said: "Brothers, I speak in human terms: even when a covenant is a human one, once it has been ratified, no one can annul it or add to it. Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed."¹⁵⁷ It does

¹⁵². Cf. Gn 22.17; 26.4.

¹⁵³. Cf. Gn 12.3; 18.18; 22.18.

¹⁵⁴. Dt 27.26.

¹⁵⁵. Hab 2.4.

¹⁵⁶. Gal 3.8-12; Lv 18.5.

¹⁵⁷. Or "offspring."

not say, 'and to seeds,' referring to many, but 'and to your seed,' referring to one, who is Christ. What I am saying is this: the law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not abolish a covenant previously ratified by God and so nullify the promise. For if the inheritance is based upon the law, it is no longer based upon a promise, yet God freely granted it to Abraham through a promise."¹⁵⁸

To these things Paul immediately adds the cause for which the law was introduced,¹⁵⁹ saying this: "Why, then, the law? It was added on account of transgressions, until the seed should come to whom the promise had been made, and was ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator does not act for one party; but God is one. Is the law then opposed to the promise of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been on the basis of law. But the Scripture has confined all under sin, so that what was promised through faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. Yet before faith came, we were in the custody of the law, being kept for the glory that would later be revealed. So the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor, for you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus."¹⁶⁰

One may not in the least bit doubt that the law reproved the weaknesses of those being instructed, and made their faults and sins all the more obvious. For "where there is no law," Paul says, "neither is there transgression."¹⁶¹ And again, "I would not have known sin, except through the law."¹⁶² And "when the commandment came," he says, "sin came to life, and I died."¹⁶³ Yet again, "Before the law, sin was in the world, but sin is not reckoned where there is no law,"¹⁶⁴ for "the law produces wrath."¹⁶⁵

158. Gal 3.15-18.

159. Var. "the law was added, as it were, to faith."

160. Gal 3.19-26.

161. Rom 4.15.

162. Rom 7.7.

163. Rom 7.9.

164. Rom 5.13.

165. Rom 4.15.

So the law served as our tutor with regard to Christ, at one and the same time reproving transgressors and instructing people upon the earth through their very experiences, [157] teaching how humankind, being afflicted with the proneness to sin, is incapable of escaping the indictment of the law, and so must wholly look to the salvation that comes through Christ, who justifies us by faith and in mercy.

2. It is evident, then, that the words of the divine economy before us presented through the ordinance of Moses a most useful¹⁶⁶ portrayal ahead of time of the grace in Christ that was to follow on directly after, which would bring forth the offspring foreannounced in the promise of God, that is, those who are in Christ through faith. For it was in this way that the divine Abraham became the father of an uncountable number of offspring.

Observe, therefore, the form of the divine economy, finely fashioned once again by means of a type involving the two brothers originating from Isaac, namely, Esau and Jacob. So it was said by God to the divine Abraham, "*In Isaac will your offspring be named.*"¹⁶⁷ Paul, one who was learned in the law, when interpreting this oracle, said, "The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. It does not say, 'and to seeds,' referring to many, but 'and to your seed,' referring to one, who is Christ." It is in Christ, then, that the things promised were brought to fulfillment, and in some manner Isaac was ordained as a representation and type of him.

Now the designation "Isaac" means delight and joy. The divine David speaks of Christ as "joy" when, as if in the presence of those longing for the salvation that comes through him, he says, "You are my joy, to deliver me from those who have surrounded me."¹⁶⁸ For in Christ we have escaped the attacks of murderers; in him we have trampled upon snakes and scorpions; we who believe in him have trodden upon the asp and the basilisk.¹⁶⁹

The prophetic word also convinces us that Christ is termed

166. Or "most forceful."

167. Gn 21.12. For the Pauline quotation following, see n. 158.

168. Ps 32.7 (31.7 LXX).

169. An unidentifiable venomous snake; cf. Ps 91.13 LXX. See also Lk 10.19.

“joy” by the divine Scriptures, as is found here: “And the Lord will cause righteousness and joy to spring up before all the nations.”¹⁷⁰ Emmanuel in fact became righteousness and joy not only to those of Israel, but also to the nations and peoples of all the earth. For we have been justified in him, and have been removed from under that ancient and ignominious curse. Having been set free from sin and death, we have been clothed with gladness and joy; and why not, seeing that we have been made rich with good things from God above?

Accordingly, we have been taught to give praise, saying, “May my soul rejoice in the Lord; for he has clothed me with the garment of salvation, and the robe of gladness.”¹⁷¹ And what is this robe of gladness? The most venerable Paul explains, saying, “For as many of you who have been baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ.”¹⁷² And again, “Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its lusts.”¹⁷³

So then, in these most useful objects of contemplation set before us, Isaac, through his being a type of Christ, may be taken as this “joy.”

Now this man’s wife was Rebekah, whose name may be interpreted as “abundant and holy perseverance.”¹⁷⁴ Yet, if we understand the person of this woman correctly, we shall also take her as indicating the church, whose glory lies in its perseverance. At all events, for those who are her children, meaning her children by faith and by the Spirit, [160] perseverance shows itself to be the way of salvation.¹⁷⁵ For at one time the sacred words addressed them saying, “By your perseverance you will gain your souls,”¹⁷⁶ and at another time saying, “For you have need

170. Is 61.11.

171. Is 61.10.

172. Gal 3.27.

173. Rom 13.14.

174. Or “patience.” How Cyril, or his source, arrives at this meaning of “Rebekah” is something of a mystery. The cognate Hebrew verb *rābaq* means “bind” or “join.”

175. Or “for those who are her children, patience shows itself to be the way of salvation, so to speak, by faith and by the Spirit.”

176. Lk 21.19.

of perseverance, so that when you have done the will of God, you will obtain what was promised."¹⁷⁷

Observe, then, that Rebekah, being in labor after some time and with some difficulty (for she had been barren), through both the beneficence of God and the affection¹⁷⁸ of Isaac, brought to the birth her firstborn son Esau, and also Jacob who came out immediately after. In these we see most excellently portrayed once again two peoples, namely, Israel and of course the people taken out of the Gentiles. The firstborn is Israel, the one who is summoned forth first through the law. After that comes the second, that which is a people through Christ by faith.

One might see the difference between the two peoples as being in disposition and habit, and also, I believe, in the names that each of the two had, and in the form of their bodies or their constitution. On one hand, the name "Esau" actually means "oak tree,"¹⁷⁹ that is to say, hard and unbending. In one passage God said to Israel, "I know that you are hard, and your neck is an iron sinew and your forehead bronze."¹⁸⁰ Jacob, on the other hand, means "supplanter,"¹⁸¹ that is trickster, or one who knows how to prevail. Now one supplants him who is inferior. It is not at all the people under the law but those who are a people through faith in Christ who so prevail, thwarting the accusations of sin and debilitating the very power of death.

Furthermore, it is written here that Esau was *red and hairy all over, like an animal skin*, while Jacob was *a smooth-skinned man*.¹⁸² Redness is a figure of anger and wrath, since it is indeed always the case that one's complexion reddens in a state of anger. And how could one doubt that hairiness and roughness are characteristics relating to beastliness? Everybody, I believe, can

¹⁷⁷ Heb 10.36.

¹⁷⁸ Var. "petition."

¹⁷⁹ This is another questionable derivation. More probably the name relates to the idea of "hairy"; cf. Gn 25.25.

¹⁸⁰ Is 48.4.

¹⁸¹ In both Greek and Hebrew the word is related to "heel," and may mean "one who grasps the heel"; cf. Gn 25.26. This may indeed be an idiom for "supplant" or "take advantage of."

¹⁸² Gn 27.11.

perceive that Israel lived in bestial habits, controlled more by wrath¹⁸³ than by proper reason, being much inclined towards audacious and wild behavior. Accordingly, they slew the holy prophets, and also in later times treated Emmanuel in an ungodly fashion. As for smoothness, however, this is manifestly something that pertains to humanity. The new people of faith are exceedingly gentle and extremely mild. Politeness of speech is in fact a clear indication of inner spiritual beauty,¹⁸⁴ just as we have taken the hairiness and redness of Esau to signify wildness.

Yet these two sons both had the same mother, Rebekah. And so our Lord Jesus Christ presented to himself the church as a pure virgin, who in a way served to produce the spiritual regeneration¹⁸⁵ of the two peoples. As far as the aim of Christ's advent is concerned, he created these into one new man, making peace and reconciling them both in one Spirit, as it is written.¹⁸⁶ Yet Israel, being the firstborn in time, was antagonistic and unrestrained in their conduct towards the younger people of God. For it is apparent, as I consider it, that the jostling about of the babies in the womb in a way signified the coming hostility between them. But that the younger would be the greater and would exceed [161] Israel, the firstborn, in glory, the one who knows all things straight away indicated, saying, "*One people will have preeminence over the other, and the elder will serve the younger.*"

The mystery concerning these two was proclaimed ahead of time through the mouth of the saints,¹⁸⁷ and that the "Israel of the nations" would follow later was earlier promised to us in diverse ways. The oracle of God was showing forth the matter in the birth itself. Esau indeed came out of the womb first, yet when it said that Jacob took hold of Esau's heel, it demonstrated that he would supplant and prevail over his brother,

3. The foregoing are, for the moment, the things that may be said which arise out of the form of their bodies and the manner of their birth. Nonetheless, by means of other considerations

183. Var. "... habits, rather than by proper reason."

184. Or "beauty of mind."

185. Or "new spiritual birth."

186. Cf. Eph 2.15-16.

187. That is, the prophets.

we may, as we are able, speak further concerning these two sons. Information is in fact given about the disposition of each one and each one's way of life. The young men were indeed the same age as one another, yet they were not equal in discernment nor similar in their purposes. For Esau loved to spend his time in the countryside hunting, while Jacob was fond of home life; evidently he was affable and sociable, a man who naturally preferred to stay at home. Esau was uncontrollable with respect to his carnal lusts, disregarding the most excellent of his own endowments, as if they were something most mean, exchanging them for the most basic necessities. Jacob, on the other hand, was a ceaseless admirer of noble things,¹⁸⁸ seeking out everywhere the things by means of which he might become eminent. For he purchased the right of the firstborn when Esau cast it aside, counting the fullness of his stomach to be more important than his own dignity, for which he cared nothing. His name from then on was therefore called Edom, that is, "earthy."¹⁸⁹ The fact that he had no regard for the glory that was laid up for him and no concern whatsoever for the privileges of being the elder is clear proof of his truly earthly and most base mind. Rather, he preferred temporal pleasure as being something better and of greater value, accounting momentary enjoyment as more excellent, even though it might mean much loss to himself.

The divine Paul, therefore, suitably called one who had chosen to live in such a shameful manner "immoral and profane." In a way he puts forward Esau as a type of those who sink down into this kind of despicable conduct. At any rate, he brings an accusation and indictment against unrestrained desires, which are manifestly carnal and more earthly, saying, "See that no one becomes immoral or profane like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal."¹⁹⁰

Surely, then, it is appropriate that we should closely compare the conduct of these young men with the dark behavior of the Jews and the pure and free assembly of those taken from among

188. Or "noble men."

189. In Hebrew the name "Edom" is etymologically related to *'ādāmā*, "earth," "soil."

190. Heb 12.16.

the Gentiles. For Israel was indeed wild and earthy, having a mental disposition that was both haughty and aggressive, terrible in their bloodthirstiness, corresponding to the wild killer of beasts, Esau. Indeed, even the prophetic word accuses them, saying that "they have laid snares to destroy men."¹⁹¹ Christ himself is roused against them, saying, "Without cause they have hidden their snare of destruction for me; without reason they have reproached my soul. May a snare come upon them unawares; and may the trap which they have hidden catch [164] them."¹⁹² For they sent certain of the Pharisees along with those called Herodians (these were exactors of tax), who tested him, saying, "Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"¹⁹³ Israel then was a hunter.¹⁹⁴

The new people of God, however, those who are so by faith, who correspond to the divine Jacob, are urbane and lovers of home life, gentle and calm, sincere and without guile, staying at home, according to what is written. It is true to say that the peaceable congregation of those justified by faith, which constitutes the church,¹⁹⁵ is like a certain splendid, well-ordered city, and a house firmly established, immovable when tested, whose conduct and life are wrought in Christ. Their minds are sincere, free from all perversity. They consider that false thinking and feigned behavior should be greatly shunned. It is concerning these, I believe, that the divine David somewhere said, "The Lord gives the single a home to dwell in."¹⁹⁶ For those who are single-minded¹⁹⁷ are the sincere in Christ, who are given a home to dwell in. Indeed, one of the holy prophets declared to Israel, saying, "You have become weary in your many wanderings."¹⁹⁸

191. Jer 5.26.

192. Ps 35.7-8 (34.7-8 LXX).

193. Lk 20.22.

194. That is, one who traps or snares.

195. Lit. "registered as the church."

196. Ps 68.6 (67.7 LXX).

197. In the psalm citation the adjective *monotropos* has the physical sense of being "alone," while Cyril follows this with the spiritual sense, that is, "single-minded," which in Greek belongs to the same domain as "sincere" (*haplous*).

198. Is 57.10.

Those in Christ, then, take up their dwelling, as it were, in a house of reverent conduct and sanctified living. In attaining this they are, in a manner, weaving garlands¹⁹⁹ for their heads, counting it also as a happy way of life. Therefore, on one occasion they say, "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord,'"²⁰⁰ and on another, "One thing I have asked from the Lord; this I will seek." And what was the request? What did this one favor consist of? "That I may dwell in the house of the Lord," it says, "all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and look upon his holy temple."²⁰¹ Do you hear how dwelling in the house of God and spending time in the divine courts is reckoned to be such a wonderful and exquisite form of grace? This state of dwelling, however, is not physical, but is rather to be interpreted as steadfastness of mind and virtuous living.²⁰²

It further says that *Isaac loved Esau, because he liked to eat wild game*. Israel the firstborn was in fact worthy of heavenly love, because the people brought to God, as it were, a manner of food, in the form of a correct legal way of life and labors performed on the basis of the law. For even in Israel there were saints who loved God and observed the law. And so when the prophet Isaiah denounced the Jerusalem that played the harlot, he said that at one time "righteousness lodged in her,"²⁰³ that is, rested and stayed there, in that there were many within her who adopted the glorious way of life set down in the law.

Israel then, being the firstborn, had glory with God, yet he did not permanently preserve the honor that had been bestowed upon him of being the elder son. But, in that he was greatly inclined towards the things of the flesh and of the world, he handed over the right of the firstborn to the new people of God that followed, that is, those taken from among the Gentiles. In the gospel parables we read how, "The king gave a wed-

199. The term *stephanos* is usually translated "crown." The sense here is that of a victor's "wreath."

200. Ps 122.1 (121.1 LXX).

201. Ps 27.4 (26.4 LXX).

202. Var. "a life showing love of virtue."

203. Is 1.21.

ding feast [165] for his son.”²⁰⁴ Then those sent to invite the guests to the feast went and announced to them the message from God, which was: “Behold, I have prepared my banquet; my bulls and fattened calves have been slain, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.” It says, however, that they did not want to come. Rather, each one seemed to have an excuse. One said, “I have married a wife. Please excuse me.” Another said, “I have bought a field and am not able to come.” You see, then, in what way they resemble Esau, counting temporal, fleshly pleasures as being of greater value than glory from God, and so in effect they hold out the right of the firstborn for others to take. For those of the Gentiles who believed were immediately invited in their place on account of their readiness to obey, their great virtue, and their being moved to perform those things that are pleasing to God. And so they benefited from the glory and blessing that ought to have been Israel’s. We have here also the testimony of the divine David, who says this about them: “You have heard the desire of the needy, Lord; your ear is inclined to the willingness of their hearts.”²⁰⁵ For those who are the people of God through faith are always most ready to obey, even though the people of Israel had previously received greater instruction through the law. Although the multitude of the Gentiles suffered from a lack of divine teaching, they had much better things by faith that endowed them with an ear attentive to the oracles of Christ. To this the latter utters his own testimony. For through the singing of the psalmist he said, “A people I did not know served me; as soon as they heard, they obeyed me.”²⁰⁶

With regard to Israel, however, once they had fallen into a state of estrangement and no longer considered it worthwhile to live uprightly, it says that their faculty of thinking was incapacitated: “Sons of strangers dealt falsely with me, sons of strangers grew weary and stumbled lamely off their paths.”²⁰⁷ The straight and true paths, being the instruction given through the law and

204. For these parables, see Mt 22.1–14 and Lk 14.15–24.

205. Ps 10.17 (9.38 LXX).

206. Ps 18.43–44 (17.44–45 LXX).

207. Ps 18.44–45 (17.45–46 LXX).

the predictions of the holy prophets, lead to Christ. But when they reached the end indicated by the law and the prophets, that end being Christ, they were lame through their lack of understanding. So it was not due to sound thinking that they raged against him and were bold enough even to put to death the Author of life.²⁰⁸

That the new people of faith, having a more excellent disposition for submitting to the divine commands, took hold of the blessing due to Israel, we may also understand from this. For it is written here: *When Isaac was old, his eyes became so dim that he could not see. He called Esau, his firstborn son, and said to him, "My son." And he said, "Here I am." Isaac said, "Behold, I have grown old, and I do not know the day of my death. So now take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out into the country, and hunt game for me. Prepare the meat for me the way I like it, and bring it for me to eat, that my soul may bless you before I die."*²⁰⁹ This is what the father said to Esau.

Esau immediately succeeded in hunting down an animal [168], and, bringing it home, he freshly prepared it. And what happened next? Rebekah persuaded Jacob to do the same thing before Esau did, and to take hold of the blessing as well. At first Jacob was afraid to do it. But as his mother urged him, he brought in two goats from the fields, fine and tender, and cooked them nicely. Placing their skins on his shoulders, covering the exposed part of his neck, he managed to reproduce the hairiness and shagginess of Esau, so that if he happened to be touched, he would deceive his father's hands.²¹⁰

Then taking the meal in his hands, *Jacob went in to his father, and said, "Father." Isaac said, "Here I am. Who are you, child?" Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau, your firstborn son. I have done what you told me. Come and sit down, and eat my game, so that your soul may bless me." When the old man had eaten what was set before him, he said to the lad, "Come here and kiss me, child." Jacob went and kissed him. When Isaac caught the smell of his clothes, he blessed him and said to him, "Behold, the smell of my son is like the smell of a full-grown field,*

208. Cf. Acts 3.15.

209. Gn 27.1-4.

210. Cf. Gn 27.5-16.

which the Lord has blessed. Now may the Lord give you of the dew of heaven, and of the richness of the earth, an abundance of grain and wine. May the nations serve you, and the rulers bow down to you. Be lord over your brother; the sons of your father will bow to you. He who curses you shall be cursed, and he who blesses you shall be blessed."²¹¹

So Jacob obtained the blessing of his father first. Later Esau brought in his game from the fields and, setting it before his father, he found it not to be required. He then learned what had happened, for he immediately heard from Isaac, "*Your brother came deceitfully and took away your blessing.*"²¹² With tears Esau said, "*Do you have only one blessing, father? Bless me too.*" But Isaac further said, "*Behold, your dwelling will be away from the richness of the earth and away from the dew of heaven above. By your sword you will live, and you will serve your brother. But the time will come when you break free and loosen his yoke from your neck.*"²¹³

So then, having brought together the broad span of the literal account into just a few words, we have suitably set it before the readers. I take it to be necessary, by means of those physical events that happened, to make application to spiritual things.

4. We are saying, therefore, that even before those others, namely, those called in Christ, became the people of God through faith, the Master and Father of all gave commandments to Israel. These related to wonderful rewards, so to speak, to the fruits of virtuous behavior, and to the profit of good works, that the people of Israel should be moved to offer to God a pleasing manner of life. This way of life was described long ago in the law, though to a large extent it lay hidden in types, and certain matters could be overlooked on account of the many words used. It was not unattainable, however, to those desiring to go hunting for it through careful spiritual contemplation. This latter is, I believe, the meaning of Isaac's desire for the game meat of Esau.

Yet Israel, as I said, was instated first as the people of God, and, what is more, they undertook to perform these duties correctly. For at Horeb, when the congregation was gathered

²¹¹. Cf. Gn 27.18–19, 26–29.

²¹². Gn 27.35.

²¹³. Cf. Gn 27.38–40.

together and God descended in the form of fire upon Mount Sinai, Israel said, "Everything that the Lord God says, we will do and obey."²¹⁴ But, even though they were set to receive the promise, events showed their extreme negligence. That is why they would have to lose their place, and so it was that the supplanter Jacob, [169] that is, the new people of God through faith, then took precedence. Rising up as the people who would be the firstborn, they presented to God the things required, bearing the fruit of faith, which is a form of food that divine nature produces.²¹⁵ And so when the Savior pointed out to the holy apostles the conversion of the Samaritans, he said, "I have food to eat, which you do not know about."²¹⁶ Then he explained plainly what he meant: "My food," he says, "is to do the will of him who sent me, and to complete his work."²¹⁷

Moreover, Christ taught us by means of a parable that Israel's readiness to undertake their duties was in fact worthless to them, since it was not followed up with actions. The parable also taught that the lateness with which the Gentiles came to faith in no way hindered them from coming to know the Redeemer and honoring him henceforth with their ready obedience in all kinds of good works. He said, "A certain man had two sons, and going to the first, he said, 'Son, today go and work in my vineyard.' But he answered, 'I don't want to.' Yet later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the other son and said the same thing. That one answered, 'Yes, sir,' but he did not go. Which of the two²¹⁸ did the will of his father?"²¹⁹ Evidently it was the one who went into the vineyard, even though there was a short period of weakness that caused him to delay doing so.

We see here Esau very ready to be sent forth to hunt game and undertaking to do so, but he is preceded in this by Jacob, who, although he at first refused to do it, nevertheless received his father's blessing. So too the new people of God take hold

²¹⁴. Cf. Ex 19.8; 24.7; Dt 5.27.

²¹⁵. Cyril here means the "divine nature" that is created within his people (cf. 2 Pt 1.4).

²¹⁶. Jn 4.32.

²¹⁷. Jn 4.34.

²¹⁸. Var. add "does it say."

²¹⁹. Cf. Mt 21.28-31.

of the blessing, having in effect an outward form of the Jewish manner of life, just as Jacob skillfully reproduced the hairiness of Esau by means of the goatskins. Yet he immediately heard his father exclaim, "*The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau.*"²²⁰

In what way can this becoming similar in outward form be applied to those who are the people of God through faith? And what about their copying the Jewish manner of life while having a voice that is different from theirs? We affirm, as is always the case with respect to the divine Scriptures, that the hand symbolizes work, deeds, or practical activity. As far as the similarity of their activity and the extent of their deeds are concerned, those in Christ fulfill the law by performing a spiritual priestly ministry, offering themselves as a pleasing aroma to God the Father. In fact, Christ plainly set before us laws in connection with the gospel also. "Do not think," he says, "that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one jot or one tittle will pass away from the law, until all is accomplished."²²¹

So you see that those who are in Christ fulfill the law by receiving circumcision in the Spirit, rather than the circumcision of the flesh. Also, when they enter into the rest given by Christ, they are keeping the Sabbath in Christ. And so they show that they are Jews inwardly in a hidden manner. This, I believe, is what it means to have the hands of Esau [172] while having a voice different from his. For we have no use for the unbridled speech of the Jews, neither is it our practice to blaspheme by denying the Master who redeemed us. Rather, we glorify, alongside God the Father, the Son, whom we name Lord, Savior, and Redeemer.

5. I think it worthwhile also to examine the import of the blessing with regard to both sons and to speak of what comes to mind, for such matters might be of benefit to the readers.

The blessed Isaac said in the presence of Jacob, "*Behold, the smell of my son is like the smell of a full-grown field, which the Lord*

220. Gn 27.22.

221. Mt 5.17–18.

has blessed. Now may the Lord give you of the dew of heaven, and of the richness of the earth, an abundance of grain and wine. May the nations serve you, and the rulers bow down to you. Be lord over your brother; the sons of your father will bow to you. He who curses you shall be cursed, and he who blesses you shall be blessed." In these words the literal sense has in a way mixed things together and through two persons arrives at one truth, to which witness is also given by their actions.

These matters were not in fact wholly fulfilled in Jacob but in Christ and in those who have been justified by faith, who have also become children according to the promise in Isaac. Therefore, the sense of the prophecy will also apply to the new people of God and to Christ himself, the one who comes first and takes the lead. He is also considered to be a second Adam, and he was born as a second root of humanity. For what is in Christ is a new creation, and we are renewed in him for sanctification, incorruption, and life. The words of the blessing, I believe, denote the spiritual aroma in Christ, like that of a field or a meadow blooming abundantly, spreading a beautiful and pleasant fragrance from its spring flowers. So Christ described himself to us in the Song of Songs, saying, "I am a flower of the plain, a lily of the valleys."²²² He was, indeed, a lily and a rose sprung up from the earth, for the sake of humankind. Since he knew no sin, he was the most Godlike of those inhabiting the whole world, bringing forth a pleasing aroma through the perfection of his deeds. Therefore, it likens Christ to a field blessed by God, and rightly so, as he is the fragrance of the knowledge of God the Father. Again the divine Paul says, "Thanks be to God, who always leads us triumphantly in Christ, and reveals the fragrance of his knowledge in every place through us."²²³ Our Lord Jesus Christ is revealed through the holy apostles as the fragrance of the knowledge of God the Father. "For if anyone knows the Son, he also fully knows the Father,"²²⁴ because he shares in the very same nature, and because in absolutely everything he holds equal and identical possession.

²²². Song 2.1.

²²³. 2 Cor 2.14.

²²⁴. This inexact citation is reminiscent of Jn 14.9 and Mt 11.27.

These things, then, apply to Christ, and may also be suitably applied to the new people of God: “*May the Lord give you of the dew of heaven, and of the richness of the earth, an abundance of grain and wine.*”²²⁵ For the dew of heaven and the richness of the earth, that is, the Word coming forth from God the Father, has surely been given to us according to our participation in him through the Spirit, and through him we have “become partakers of divine nature.”²²⁶ We have also obtained an abundance [173] of grain and wine, that is, strength and gladness. Indeed, the word is true that says, “Bread strengthens the heart of man, and wine makes it glad.”²²⁷ Bread is the symbol of spiritual strength, and wine of gladness. These are given to those in Christ through him. How else, then, were we made firm and immovable in piety, knowing how to think aright, and to stand unshakeable? For we have received authority to tread upon snakes and scorpions and upon all the power of the enemy.²²⁸ This I believe to be the abundance of grain. But we have also received wine. “In hope we rejoice,”²²⁹ and “We have been made glad,”²³⁰ as it is written. For we look forward to dwellings above, life incorruptible and everlasting, and to reigning with Christ. These things, therefore, may be said about us. The words are reasonably taken as indicating this.

The content of the blessing would later be transferred upon Emmanuel himself. “*Let nations serve you,*” it says, “*and let rulers bow down to you, and be lord of your brother.*”²³¹ Emmanuel was named “firstborn” when he became one like ourselves, one who was “among many brothers.”²³² But not on this account should we forget that he is also God and Lord of all. We worship him as Master, and he has dominion as God over those called to be his brothers through grace. “For who in the heavens,” it says, “can be compared to the Lord? And who among the sons of God

225. Gn 27.28.

226. 2 Pt 1.4.

227. Ps 104.15 (103.15 LXX).

228. Cf. Lk 10.19.

229. Rom 12.12.

230. Ps 126.3 (125.3 LXX).

231. Gn 27.29.

232. Rom 8.29.

can be likened to him?"²³³ Therefore, Emmanuel has dominion as God over those brought into his brotherhood, and to him "every knee shall bow in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."²³⁴ And cursed is he who curses, and blessed is he who blesses.²³⁵ This saying is clear. Those who slander him are accursed and hateful to God; those who bless,²³⁶ that is, those proclaiming his divine glory, are filled with heavenly gifts from God.

6. That, then, is the blessing of Jacob, the import of which has reference to Emmanuel himself and to those justified by faith. Let us look also at the other blessing, that is, the one given to the firstborn, evidently indicating that blessing given to Israel, of which Esau was a type. Now it says, "*Behold, your dwelling will be away from the richness of the earth and away from the dew of heaven above. By your sword you will live, and you will serve your brother. But the time will come when you break free and loosen his yoke from your neck.*"

The blessing granted to Israel was in fact the law given through Moses, for it was the word of Christ administered through angels. That it was Christ himself who was speaking to those of old the most-wise Paul proves when he writes, "At many times and in many ways God spoke long ago to the fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son."²³⁷ The Savior himself also showed the law to be his own words when he said,

²³³. Ps 89.6 (88.7 LXX).

²³⁴. Phil 2.10–11.

²³⁵. Cf. Gn 27.29.

²³⁶. Var. "those eager to bless."

²³⁷. Heb 1.1–2. In this argument, occurring several times elsewhere in his writings (e.g., PG 68: 489; 70: 893), Cyril expresses his belief that it was the Son of God who spoke in the OT revelations as much as in the New. His understanding of the Hebrews citation does not seem to be that "long ago" and "in these last days" there were two distinct sources of revelation, but rather that the Son is source of both, and that only in the case of the latter is that revelation unmediated. In the older dispensation it had been mediated through the prophets and through angels. For this reason, the latter revelation, directly from the Son, may be regarded as the superior. For further discussion of this issue, see Matthew R. Crawford, *Cyril of Alexandria's Trinitarian Theology of Scripture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 116–18, 126–27.

“Truly I say to you, until heaven and [176] earth pass away, not one jot or one tittle will pass away from the law until all is accomplished. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words will never pass away.”²³⁸ Therefore, since it is true that even the law given through angels was the word of Christ, it was a form of blessing to Israel, and we may consider “*the dew of heaven*” and “*the richness of the earth*” to be Christ. For as the multitude of the angels is abundantly watered by the spiritual dew of heaven, so too the earth delights in giving its riches through the spiritual rains that cause it to produce spiritual fruit.

We, however, who are in Christ through faith, have been made rich in bread and wine. Israel does not share in these things, for such were not conferred by the blessings given to Esau. The poor Jews likewise do not share in the mystical blessing, since neither was this given under the ministration of the law. Rather, it was reserved for the people who are in Christ by faith. We, moreover, are at peace through Christ, while Israel is at war. We have inherited the land promised literally,²³⁹ which was a type of that which is spiritual and heavenly. This the Savior himself spoke of, saying, “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.”²⁴⁰ Also, we are included among the children of God through the Spirit of freedom. We are admitted to Christ as to one who is like us, a brother, and we perform a noble and willing obedience.

Israel, on the other hand, was placed under a yoke, weighed down by the laws of Moses, suffering death as the punishment for transgressions. For Esau heard the words, “*and you will serve your brother*,” that is, “you shall be made subject, unwillingly, to one whose nature is like yours.” Now Moses too was a man like us, there being nothing extraordinary about him as far as his humanity was concerned.²⁴¹ For this reason the Master of all called Israel the people of Moses. For when they made the calf in the wilderness, God said to Moses, “Go down quickly from

238. Mt 5.18; 24.35.

239. Meaning “the land promised at the literal level of meaning.”

240. Mt 5.5. The Greek word for “earth” here is the same as the one for “land” in the previous sentence.

241. Or “as far as a human evaluation is concerned.”

here, for your people, whom you brought out of Egypt, have acted lawlessly.”²⁴² So also the divine Paul attributes the written law to the blessed Moses, when he said, “Anyone who disregarded the law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.”²⁴³

Yet Israel will lay aside the yoke placed upon them through the all-wise Moses when Christ calls them to the grace that comes through faith. This was indicated in advance by the words, “*But the time will come when you break free and loosen his yoke from your neck.*” For those of Israel who have come to believe have loosened the exceedingly heavy yoke of the law from their necks, in that they have been called to the dignity of freedom through faith in Christ, through whom and with whom be glory to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

²⁴². Ex 32.7.

²⁴³. Heb 10.28.



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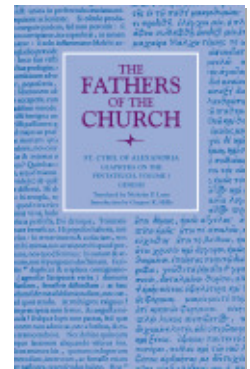
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BOOK FOUR: GENESIS 27–30

[177] *Concerning the patriarch Jacob*

IT IS TRUE that “all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”¹ For the sons of iniquity pounce upon them like wild animals, reckoning the excellence of those whose practice it is to live respectably as a reason to denounce them and to accuse them of a kind of depravity. For in some way those things that are worse are always exposed² when placed alongside those things that are better, and the ugly nature of that which is inferior serves to outline that which is of greater value.

What, then, do we learn from this? The arrows of envy and the smoldering fire caused by the jealousy of those shown to be inferior are the beginning of madness and the origin of wickedness against those who have chosen to live most nobly. Yet these latter, although they may encounter trials and suffering, are by no means easily overcome by those who war against them. For he who governs the affairs of the saints certainly does not overlook those who expose themselves to danger for his sake. Rather, he will all the more readily deliver them and, having ordained these struggles as an exercise in hardship for them, he will show them to be of a more excellent character.

The divine Paul also affirms this when he writes, “God is faithful, who shall not let you be tested beyond what you are able to bear, but with the trial he will also provide the way out, so that you can endure it.”³ Further, those acquainted with trials, who have nobly borne with the pain of persecutions, cry out

1. 2 Tm 3.12.

2. Or “reproved.”

3. 1 Cor 10.13.

in the book of Psalms: "You have tested us, O God; you have refined us with fire as silver is refined. You brought us into the snare; you laid afflictions upon our backs; you set men upon our heads. We went through fire and water, but you brought us to a place of respite."⁴ You understand that it is not at all a matter of them having learned how to endure the things by which they are tested. Rather, they rejoice in the fact that they are being shown to be better people. What they are is made known by means of the trial itself, and through their suffering testimony is given to the extent of their piety. For they said that they indeed went through fire. In the same way, I believe, the finest incense, when it comes into contact with fire, then brings forth the demonstration⁵ of the fragrance that it is endowed with. Thus also the pious soul, when burnt in the fire, as it were, through testing and suffering, brings forth a most distinct manifestation of the manifold virtues present within it.

Besides this, with regard to every saint the divine David in one place also sings out, "The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him [180], and he will deliver them."⁶ Again, the one who provides succor himself expressly says, "Because he has put his hope in me, I will deliver him. He will cry out to me, and I will hear him. I am with him in affliction; I will deliver him and glorify him. With long life I will satisfy him and will show him my salvation."⁷

So what manner of salvation is this salvation of God the Father? From him comes God the Word, who in the economy of his Incarnation became like us for our sakes and took on the form of a servant. It was concerning him that the Father spoke through Isaiah, saying, "And the nations will see my righteousness, and kings my glory. My salvation shall burn like a lamp."⁸ He, the Son, has in fact become our righteousness and glory from God the Father, and indeed our salvation also. For in him we have been justified and been brought into the glory of adop-

4. Ps 66.10-12 (65.10-12 LXX).

5. Or "proof."

6. Ps 34.7 (33.8 LXX).

7. Ps 91.14-16 (90.14-16 LXX).

8. Cf. Is 62.1-2.

tion as sons. So how could there be any doubt that we have been saved also, escaping the bonds of death and being translated into immortality? For the Son appeared to us like a lamp in the night and in the darkness, the divine light which penetrates the souls of those who believe. Therefore, he said, "I am the light of the world."⁹ Moreover, as the Savior also said, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness,"¹⁰ for through the aid of the God and Savior of all they will have a portion in heaven. Furthermore, they will come to see the very mystery pertaining to Christ, and certain of them might learn nothing less than those matters concerning the blessed Jacob. So I consider it appropriate to set forth those things written about him, that the readers may have a more accurate knowledge.

The account reads as follows: *Now Esau was indignant at Jacob over the matter of the blessing which his father gave him. So Esau said to himself, "Let the days of mourning for my father draw near so that I may kill Jacob my brother." And the words of Esau her elder son were reported to Rebekah. Then she sent and called for Jacob her younger son and said to him, "Behold, Esau your brother is threatening to kill you. So now, my son, obey my voice; rise up and flee to Mesopotamia, to Laban my brother in Haran. Stay with him for a while until the wrath and anger of your brother subside, and he forgets what you have done to him. Then I will send and fetch you back from there. I do not want to be bereaved of both of you in a single day."*¹¹

Then Rebekah provided her son with a suitable occasion to make the journey. Going to Isaac she said, *"I am weary of my life because of the daughters of the Hittites. If Jacob should take a wife from the daughters of this land, what reason would I have to live?"*¹² In order that the blessed Jacob might not run away without the consent of his father and so be seen as one who causes grief and anger, the woman cleverly persuaded the old man to allow their son to make the journey. It says, *Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and then commanded him, saying, "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of [181] Canaan. Rise up and go to Mesopotamia, to the*

9. Jn 8.12.

10. Mt 5.10.

11. Gn 27.41-45.

12. Gn 27.46.

*house of Bethuel, your mother's father, and take a wife for yourself from there from the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother. May my God bless you and cause you to grow and multiply, that you may become a multitude of nations. May he give you the blessing of Abraham your father, that you and your offspring after you should inherit the land where you have been living, which God gave to Abraham."*¹³

2. As far as the letter is concerned, that is, those matters revealed at the literal level, it is appropriate that both Rebekah and the blessed Jacob should be the cause of considerable astonishment. For when she brought to Isaac, the man who was chief, her request concerning their son, he, as the rightful decision-maker, immediately handled the matter according to the law of nature and instructed the son to avoid the marriage that his mother did not wish. It was with some tenderness that he directed his child, who had been brought up piously, to follow in the footsteps of his father's virtue. The divine Jacob is in fact everywhere seen to comply with the commands of his parents, giving a clear and indisputable indication of his devotion towards God.

As far as the contemplation of spiritual matters is concerned, I intend to go over the course of events again, looking at the inner meaning, undertaking to bring to mind that which is profitable. The subject here to be contemplated is in fact quite readily made manifest.

Now Rebekah, before the labor pangs came upon her, while she was still pregnant with the two boys to whom she would give birth, had an overwhelming sense of evil foreboding and was in fear of dying as the babies within her were leaping about to an excessive degree. The cause of the matter eluding her,¹⁴ she wished to consult God, and asked, "Why are things happening to me this way?"¹⁵ And how does God respond to this? "Two nations and two peoples will be separated from your womb. One people will have preeminence over the other, and the elder will serve the younger."¹⁶ We shall then represent Esau and Jacob

13. Gn 28.1-4.

14. Var. "Inquiring into the cause of the matter."

15. Gn 25.22. The Greek of the LXX here literally reads: "If it is going to be this way with me, why is this to me?"

16. Gn 25.23.

as types of two peoples—the people of Israel and the people of faith.

Now it says, *Esau was indignant at Jacob*, because he had been deprived of the privileges of being the elder son, having sold the right of the firstborn and having passed his prerogatives over to another. Also, in bringing in the meal of game meat second, he failed to obtain the blessing. And so he gave himself to violent schemes, and out of malice he thought to murder the one who was his companion and brother. So Israel, the firstborn, was likewise indignant and exceedingly angry with those who succeeded him, that is, the new people of God through faith. This was because the latter became the first in order before God, counted as having the portion of the firstborn, and was filled with heavenly blessing, having been made rich through the Spirit with the grace that is in Christ. So Israel rose up against those in Christ through faith, and forcefully laid hands upon them, as much as he wished. He became a bitter murderer, a bringer of persecution, and one who inflicts wounds with the arrows of murder¹⁷ and maliciousness.

Rebekah, however, persuaded Jacob to forsake his own home in order to escape his brother and to go to Laban, who was an idol-worshiper. Also, the divine Isaac, the father of Jacob,¹⁸ himself insisted that a marriage with a woman of Canaan should be avoided, bidding Jacob to obtain a spouse [184] from among the daughters of Laban instead.

Now the church, of which Rebekah was a type, wisely counseled the new people of God, being threatened and persecuted, to escape the wrath of those wishing to murder them. Similarly, the husband of Rebekah, that is, Christ, also gave instructions himself regarding such a thing, that a spiritual relationship should have precedence over one with those stirred up to godless passions, who think to commit cruel murder. The marriage signifies that relationship, in which the daughters of the house of Laban, that is, of the Gentiles, were to be preferred.

We find that the holy apostles, who were in fact the firstfruits of the new people of faith, were eager to fulfill the commands

17. Var. "malice."

18. Var. "of the young man Jacob."

given to Jacob. For they distanced themselves from the company of the Jews, seeing that these were threatening to murder them. Moving to another country and town, they were sensibly quick to get away from the wrath of those persecuting them. These latter are spoken of by Christ when he denounces them, saying, "When they drive¹⁹ you out of this city, flee to another."²⁰ The apostles also addressed those of the race of Israel, those who had chosen to disobey and who were causing injury without mercy. They said, "It was necessary to speak the word of God to you first; but since you reject it and judge yourselves to be unworthy of eternal life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles, for thus the Lord commanded us."²¹ You note that Christ, the bridegroom of the church, has commanded his apostles²² to go off to the multitudes of the Greeks, and there to give birth to children, and to show themselves to be, as it were, fathers of the peoples. In keeping with this, the most-wise Paul writes to those Gentiles who had come to believe through him, saying, "For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I myself became your father through the gospel."²³

That God will be united with those who are a people through faith and will richly bless them, the divine Isaac demonstrated most readily. When Jacob was about to flee from his father's home, Isaac crowned him with heavenly blessings, saying, "*May my God bless you and cause you to grow and multiply, that you may become a multitude of nations. May he give you the blessing of Abraham your father.*" Now those in Christ have indeed been blessed and have grown exceedingly. They have become numerous, a multitude of nations, and have been instated as fellow heirs with the holy fathers, for "they will recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven," as the Savior him-

19. The verb may also mean "persecute," yet since Cyril changes the Matthean "in this city" to "from this city," its manner of rendering in English has necessarily been changed.

20. Mt 10.23.

21. Acts 13.46-47.

22. The Greek phrase lacks a noun, merely saying "his own."

23. 1 Cor 4.15.

self says.²⁴ And we shall be further blessed by him, for he said concerning us, "Holy Father, keep them in your truth."²⁵

Now if Rebekah is understood also as the mother of Esau, the spiritual contemplation of what she represents is by no means undone. For we have portrayed Esau as a type of the people of Israel, while we have assigned to Rebekah the part of the church. There are, however, those of Israel who are also sons of the church through faith in Christ. These are no longer reckoned as being that old and ancient people, but rather they have been transformed into the new people of God, being mixed together with those of the nations. Indeed, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation."²⁶ He also "created the two into one new man, making peace," as the Scriptures say, "reconciling both in one Spirit [185] to the Father,"²⁷ for "he has broken down the dividing wall and abolished the law with its commandments and decrees."²⁸

3. So then, having been granted the blessings of his father, Jacob started out²⁹ on the journey that was set before him. What manner of things happened on the way we learn from the sacred Scriptures. The account reads as follows: *Now Jacob departed from the Well of the Oath³⁰ and set out for Haran. And he arrived at a certain place and lay down to sleep there, because the sun had set. He took one of the stones of that place and put it under his head, and he went to sleep there. Then he had a dream, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, the top of which was in heaven, and the angels of God were going up and down on it. And the Lord stood upon it³¹ and said, "I am the God of Abraham, your father, and the God of Isaac. Do not be afraid. The land on which you are lying I will give to you and to your offspring. Your offspring will be like the sand of the sea. They will spread out to the west,³² to the south, to the north, and to the*

24. Mt 8.11.

25. Cf. Jn 17.11, 17.

26. 2 Cor 5.17.

27. Eph 2.15-16, 18.

28. Eph 2.14-15.

29. Lit. "his feet carried him off."

30. That is, Beersheba (cf. Gn 21.31).

31. Or "above it."

32. Lit. "to the sea," that is, the Mediterranean in the west; var. "on the earth."

east. And in you and your offspring all the families of the earth will be blessed. Now behold, I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go. I will bring you back to this land, for I will not leave you until I have done everything that I have spoken to you." Then Jacob woke up from his sleep and said, *"The Lord is in this place, and I did not know it."* He was afraid and said, *"What an awesome place this is! This is nothing other than the house of God and the gate of heaven."* In the morning Jacob rose up and took the stone that he had placed under his head. He set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it. He called the name of that place *House of God*.³³ We say the name of that town is Well of the Oath because this is written concerning it: "It happened on the same day that Isaac's servants came and informed him about the well that they had dug, saying, 'We have not found water.'³⁴ So he called it Oath.³⁵ For this reason he called the town Well of the Oath to this day."³⁶ We speak further of the matter since one might wish to learn about the Well of the Oath. This was the place where the leaders of the Gerarites, namely Abimelech and those with him, had enacted an oath of peace with Isaac.

The divine Jacob, then, removed himself from his father's home and town and was separated from his family. And so he went wandering off in fear. He gave some thought to the possibility of being a vagabond and a refugee, and that he should live among foreigners. Maybe he should be under the authority of others and take on a yoke of slavery to which he was unaccustomed, for it is necessary even for those of noble birth to submit to those who rule. Yet the God who knows hearts and minds soon intervened and did not allow the soul of that righteous man to be overwhelmed by such severe apprehensions. He showed him that a multitude of angels, traversing up and down, takes care of those who depend on him. It was [188] precisely this, I believe, that Jacob was taught through the dream. Now from a literal point of view, Jacob beheld the ladder extending upwards, yet the symbol of descending and ascending

33. Gn 28.10–19.

34. The LXX adds the negative. The Hebrew reads, "We have found water."

35. Hebrew: *Sheba*.

36. Gn 26.32–33.

was describing matters, as it were, in earthly types. Jacob also heard God's voice speaking to the angels, instructing them that he himself would be the object of the blessing given to Jacob by his father, that is, "*your offspring will spread out to the east and to the west, to the north and to the south.*" The voice said that Jacob would have God himself as the one who helped him and watched over him everywhere. When he woke up, the divine Jacob was not a little astonished, and he said moreover, "*The Lord is in this place, and I did not know it.*"

How can it not be worthwhile considering what this account might wish to reveal? Among those of ancient times we find quite feeble notions with regard to God. For they supposed that the Deity was unconcerned with every other land, and was restricted to that land only,³⁷ to which they had also been called by him, having left their home and departed from the land of the Chaldeans. For since those who worship idols are afflicted with the error of polytheism, assigning to each of the divinities its own country, as it were, and making those gods worshiped to be in effect supreme rulers in each locality, they did not believe that all gods had power everywhere and ought to be honored. So too the blessed patriarchs, even after being delivered from the practice of idolatry³⁸ and the error of polytheism, and being moved to worship the one who is the true God by nature, supposed that he was not present with them in every land nor able to help them in every place, since they still retained quite defective views of God.

The blessed Jacob, therefore, was enriched through his journey, being instructed in what was lacking in his faith. For he learned that the Deity is in every place and in every country. He dwells in heaven, yet has dealings with the whole world and fills the earth. All the spirits in heaven, who are directed to traverse up and down, are subject to him, having God as their head presiding over them. It is for this reason that Jacob was amazed and said, "*The Lord is in this place, and I did not know it.*" Supposing the stone to have been the cause of the dreams, Jacob honored it with those things at hand, smearing it with oil. Moreover, he

37. Here meaning the promised land of Canaan.

38. Var. "idolatrous nations."

called that place the House of God and the Gate of Heaven, and set up the stone as a pillar.

4. Let it be said once again that these things are presented to us in very earthy narratives. So it has first been necessary to explain those matters considered difficult at the literal level. But now, moving on to the spiritual contemplation of what is set before us, we again say this—that the new people of God through faith, considered as firstfruits by the holy apostles, were in fact forced to flee to escape the wrath of those intent on murder, by which I mean the Jews. Moving from town to town, they won over³⁹ multitudes of the Gentiles, very much desiring to gather them to themselves through the fellowship formed by the Spirit. Jacob, of course, was urged to act similarly with regard to the daughters of Laban, when Esau showed that he was intending to commit savage murder.

Now once the people of God through faith have come to rest upon Christ, who is “a choice stone, a precious cornerstone,”⁴⁰ for this, I believe, [189] is what is indicated by the act of sleeping upon the stone, we then learn that they will not be alone upon the earth, but they will have the holy angels, traversing up and down, as their assistants and helpers. For in one place Christ said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, from now on you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”⁴¹ This is, I believe, the ladder—the passing up and down of the holy spirits, “sent to serve for the sake of those who shall inherit the kingdom.”⁴² Christ is stood firm on the top of the ladder, while those holy spirits come up to him, having him as their overseer, not that he is one of their kind, but is God and Lord. David in one place says to every person wanting to live with the help of the Most High, “He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you in all your ways. They will take you up in their hands, so that you do not strike your foot against a stone. You will tread upon the asp and

39. Or “courted.”

40. Is 28.16; cf. 1 Pt 2.6.

41. Jn 1.51.

42. Cf. Heb 1.14; var. “inherit salvation.”

the basilisk, and trample upon the lion and the serpent.”⁴³ We indeed have trodden upon snakes and scorpions and upon every power of the enemy, Christ giving us the authority. Those, then, who are in Christ are indeed worthy also of divine oversight and ought to be disposed boldly, because he will stand by them and succor them, everywhere he will save them and make them fruitful. “I am with you always,” he says, “even till the end of the world.”⁴⁴

That the blessed disciples were richly blessed in becoming the fathers of innumerable nations by faith in Christ and by spiritual generation is everywhere evident. Paul plainly says to those who came to faith through him, “Though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I myself became your father through the gospel.”⁴⁵ Therefore, their seed became as countless as grains of sand, and it spread to the east and to the west, to the right and to the left, to the south and to the north.

Yet the stone was set up as well, smeared with oil, and honored as a type of Christ. For Emmanuel was anointed by God the Father “with the oil of gladness above his fellows.”⁴⁶ He was also raised up from the dead, and yet he had gone down to death willingly. And this, I believe, is what the setting up of the stone means. Our Lord Jesus Christ is proclaimed through the holy apostles as the one anointed with the Holy Spirit by the Father and risen from the dead, through whom and with whom be glory⁴⁷ to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

More concerning the patriarch Jacob

1. One cannot doubt that it is especially needful for us to learn how to long for and to thirst after the divine oracles, as this is the most noble thing of all and that which is accounted

43. Ps 91.11–13 (90.11–13 LXX). Cf. Lk 10.19 for next sentence.

44. Mt 28.20.

45. 1 Cor 4.15.

46. Heb 1.9.

47. Var. add “and power.”

by God to be worthy of the highest honor. That the significance of every word is important and should fulfill its object for our benefit, the Savior himself assures us [192] when he says, "The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one pearl of great value, he went and sold everything he had and bought it."⁴⁸ So it is necessary that we seek for fine pearls, for we shall find that one pearl of great value, which is Christ. Whatever the fine pearls might be, the task of seeking to possess them is worthwhile and brings one particular pearl to the fore, and so I say that all of them are holy. Concerning these the prophet says, "Holy stones are rolled upon the ground."⁴⁹

So then, those things that the people of old both said and did are matters well deserving of our inquiry. For through these things we shall look into the depths of the mystery of godliness, which is Christ, foreshadowed in types with much wisdom and skillfulness. We shall further find that the economy of the Incarnation is also to be perceived in such matters, portrayed by means of certain vague shadows, yet not so obscurely as to be completely indiscernible.

So now, those things regarding the divine Jacob will be expounded, and the way in which he lived his life will be discussed. Also, by means of Jacob we will set forth clearly the form of the whole economy, that is, the gospel economy, flying around the most colorful elements of the literal account in the manner of bees, gathering from each what is profitable for interpreting the word. If every matter written about Jacob is not included among the spiritual interpretations, let no one be troubled. One should realize that some things that happened at the literal level are just as they are in themselves. Yet other things indeed allow also for reflection upon inner meanings and figuratively present the import of the mystery.

2. It is further written here: *And Jacob set out and went to the land of the east, to Laban the son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekeh, the mother of Jacob and Esau. And he looked, and behold, there was a well in the field. There were three flocks of sheep resting by it,*

48. Mt 13.45-46.

49. Zec 9.16 LXX.

for out of that well the flocks were watered, and there was a large stone over the mouth of the well. All the flocks would be gathered there, and they would roll away the stone from the mouth of the well and water the flocks. Then they would put back the stone in its place over the mouth of the well. Jacob said to the shepherds, "Brothers, where are you from?" They replied, "We are from Haran." He asked them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?" They answered, "We know him." Jacob asked, "Is he well?" And they said, "He is well." Now Rachel his daughter was coming with the sheep.⁵⁰ Jacob said, "The sun is still high; it is not yet time for the animals to be gathered. Water the sheep, then go and let them graze." The shepherds said, "We cannot do this until all the shepherds are gathered here. Then they will roll the stone away from the mouth of the well, and we will water them." While they were still speaking, Rachel the daughter of Laban came with her father's sheep, for she tended his flocks. And it happened that when Jacob saw [193] Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, he came and rolled the stone away from the mouth of the well and watered the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother. Then Jacob kissed Rachel and lifted up his voice and wept. He told Rachel that he was her father's nephew and Rebekah's son. Rachel ran and told these things to her father. When Laban heard the name of Jacob, the son of his sister, he ran to meet him. He embraced him and kissed him, and brought him to his house. Then Jacob told Laban everything. Laban said to him, "You are indeed my bone and my flesh!"⁵¹

Following that remarkable vision and divine revelation in which Jacob beheld a ladder reaching up into heaven,⁵² with the Lord standing upon it and the angels traversing up and down, he was expressly told that God would be with him and that his offspring would increase so as to become an innumerable multitude of peoples.

After he had set up the stone as a type of Christ, being then encouraged and having a firm hope in God for the future, Jacob

50. This sentence might, as in Hebrew, be a continuation of the speech of the shepherds, "... and behold, Rachel his daughter is coming with the sheep." The change of tense, however, in the LXX to "*was coming*" makes this reading difficult in Greek.

51. Gn 29.1-14.

52. Var. add "from the earth."

urged himself on towards the goal of his journey and came to the land lying in the east. He immediately made himself known to many shepherds as someone who was himself also thoroughly experienced in shepherding. That this was a familiar business for him is made evident when he says, *"The sun is still high; so now water the sheep, then go and let them graze."*

Jacob also made himself known to Laban's daughter, bestowing upon her the firstfruits,⁵³ as it were, of his noble character, in that he considered it worthwhile to attend to the sheep she was herding and to water them. For this signified⁵⁴ in a way that he was most probably one brought up in a noble manner, that it was quite improper for Rachel, being a virgin and ripe for marriage, to wait for the gathering of the shepherds so that once the stone had been moved she might water the sheep, and also that submitting to others on account of being the weaker was modest behavior becoming to a young woman. Moreover, it was the law of natural affection that was calling him to perform his duty to those of the same blood and to show himself useful to his relatives. Therefore, he watered Rachel's sheep, rolling away the stone by himself.

One ought to remember that the divine Moses when fleeing from the land of Egypt came to the region of the Midianites, where he too soon set about the work of shepherding. When he saw the daughters of Jethro being ill-treated, he likewise showed a similar zeal. This is what was written about him: "Moses departed from the presence of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian. When he came to the land of Midian, he sat down by a well. Now there were seven daughters of the priest of Midian, who were tending the sheep of their father Jethro. They came to draw water and filled the troughs in order to water their father's sheep. Then some shepherds came and chased them away. So Moses got up and rescued them. He also watered [196] their father's sheep. The daughters went to Jethro their father. He said to them, 'Why have you come back so soon today?' They replied, 'An Egyptian man rescued us from the shepherds. He

53. Cyril here uses a doublet, literally "first-spoils and first-fruits."

54. The subject of the main verb is here left unspecified, whether "it" or "he." It might also mean, "She understood perhaps ..."

also drew water for us and watered the sheep.' He said to his daughters, 'So where is he? Why did you leave the man behind? Invite him to have something to eat.' So Moses lived with the man."⁵⁵

You see, then, how the meanings of both passages are in a way sisters, and how those things revealed in them are very much related. The divine Moses, disdaining the excessive behavior of the other shepherds, both drew water and watered the flocks of Jethro. And so Jacob rolled the stone away by himself, although even those accustomed to doing this could not manage it without considerable effort, and he likewise watered the animals of Laban. Furthermore, as Moses took up residence with a man who was an idolater, so did the divine Jacob. For Laban was then a worshiper and servant of idols.

As the word confers upon Jacob a role in which he represents those who are the people of God through faith, let us now speak of inner meanings and discover those things hidden within the earthiness of the literal sense.

3. The "people yet to be created,"⁵⁶ of which the psalmist speaks, I do not suppose to be anything other than the new people of God in Christ, that is, those who through faith have been brought into the glory of the firstborn, having superseded the first people, Israel, who fell away. For the one who was the head has become the tail, that is, the one who took the first position, who was also known first, is now said to be the one that follows the calling of others. They have been made the back, and come behind the people of the Gentiles.

So then, the people of God in Christ through faith have supplanted those who were first, and their position is now reckoned with respect to that of the divine Jacob. The band⁵⁷ of the holy apostles, who were from the race and stock of Israel,⁵⁸ are to be understood as a kind of firstfruits of such a group. When they had been richly blessed through faith in Christ and crowned themselves, so to speak, with the grace given by the Holy Spir-

55. Ex 2.15-21.

56. Ps 102.18 (101.19 LXX).

57. Lit. "choir," "chorus."

58. Var. "of Jerusalem."

it, they clashed with those of their own race. Therefore, they had to leave them, as they were threatening murder and raging wildly. Departing from what was in effect their paternal home, the land in which they lived, namely the land of Jerusalem, the country of the Jews, they turned their attention to the regions of the Gentiles. They had Christ as their helper, assisting them in all manner of good things, and the angels also as their companions. Sustained by a heavenly hope and looking to become the fathers of many nations, to the east and west, the north and south, from them the seed spread forth, that is to say, those who were born again in the Spirit through faith and justified in Christ. These they addressed, saying, "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own special possession, that you might proclaim the excellencies⁵⁹ of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God in Christ."⁶⁰ That those appointed to teach them should be called "fathers of the peoples" by the divine Scripture, how could one question? So they forsook the land of the Jews. Leaving that arrogant and unruly people, they turned to the Gentiles, in accordance with the commandment of our Savior.

Yet [197] the apostles demonstrated forthwith that they were also spiritual shepherds, skilled in divine instruction. In this task, which was most proper for them to perform, they allowed themselves no slackness. For they earnestly conveyed the word of instruction in Christ; bringing forth what was needful, they persuaded others to comply. This is, of course, similar to what the divine Jacob did with respect to the shepherds of Haran. That he himself was a shepherd, he made plain when he said, *"The sun is still high; it is not yet time for the animals to be gathered. Water the sheep, then go and let them graze."* Do you hear how he instructed the shepherds to tend the sheep? Peter, that most-wise disciple, also commanded the elders of the people, namely the bishops, to do this same thing. "Therefore, I exhort the elders among you," he says, "as a fellow elder and witness of the suf-

59. Or "praises."

60. 1 Pt 2.9-10.

ferings of Christ, and one who will also share in the glory to be revealed. Shepherd the flock of Christ which is among you.”⁶¹

So passing through each land and town, they appointed countless other shepherds⁶² to lead the people and to care for the spiritual sheep, to feed them, as it were, in good pasture, in a fertile place, and to bring them to the most wonderful grass, namely, the inspired Scripture. For the word of God is life-giving food for the soul. Therefore, let it be said to these spiritual shepherds: “Tend to the fresh vegetation in the field, cut down the grass, and gather ripe fodder, so that your sheep may provide you with clothing.” Yet the divine disciples, in presenting to their hearers the most true teaching, showed themselves to be instructors in a way quite different from those who were shepherds among the Gentiles, that is, their wise men and teachers. And that the disciples were much more able and superior to those others, one who considers the matter might discern with no great difficulty.

Now a very heavy stone was placed over the well, and a gathering⁶³ of a great many shepherds could just about move it. Yet Jacob managed to do this alone. So what the well stands for, and what the stone also signifies, we will now speak of as we are able. In this way we will come to know the difference between the strength of the shepherds and the preeminent and surpassing strength of understanding as possessed by the disciples of the Savior.

4. Now it is the custom of Scripture to liken knowledge concerning God to water. That this knowledge was life-giving the Savior testified when he said to the Father in heaven, “This is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”⁶⁴ Also, when he was speaking with the woman of Samaria, he said, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living

61. 1 Pt 5.1–2.

62. Here and in what follows, the same word could be translated “pastors.”

63. Var. “pushing.”

64. Jn 17:3.

water.”⁶⁵ I believe that the words and instruction he spoke were in a sense life-giving. So too the Master proclaimed, “If any one thirsts, let him come to me and drink.”⁶⁶

Furthermore, speaking through the prophet, God accuses certain people who, after the instruction given in the law, had ignorantly turned aside and resorted to other teachers, inclining to the teachings and commandments of men.⁶⁷ This is what he said: “Heaven is astonished at this and [200] exceedingly horrified, says the Lord. For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and they have dug for themselves broken cisterns, that can hold no water.”⁶⁸

So then, the life-giving water is the divine word. Yet it lies at a great depth, and I do not suppose one would ever be able to get to it without considerable effort. For it is not willing to be obtained by those who simply wish to have it. Being covered, as it were, with a heavy stone that is difficult to move, its obscurity defeats the feebleness of our mental abilities. So much labor and sweat are necessary on the part of those tending the spiritual flocks in order to take the word out from its obscurity, to draw it from the depths, as it were, and bring it up into the open, and so to set it forth clearly for the life-giving benefit of their listeners.

Regarding, however, those shepherds among the Greeks, that is, the many wise and leading men⁶⁹ among them, the majority of whom agree together in the doctrines relating to God, these in effect subvert the truth, for they do not hold correct views concerning him. While they confess the being of God, they apportion the glory of the Godhead to whatsoever they might choose.⁷⁰

Now, just one of those shepherds in Christ is enough to take the stone off the well, despite the fact that it is extremely dif-

65. Jn 4.10.

66. Jn 7.37.

67. Cf. Is 29.13.

68. Jer 2.12-13.

69. Here Cyril means the Greek philosophers and teachers.

70. Cyril is here referring to the widespread practice of polytheism.

ficult to move. This indicates the removal of the covering and obscurity that lay over those notions concerning God. Accordingly, these shepherds make the truth clear to the Gentiles and they do not hesitate to show forth the one true being of God. The blessed Paul, for example, when he came to Athens, set the living water before the leading men, saying, “Men of Athens, I see that in every respect you are very religious. For as I was passing through, looking at your objects of worship, I even found an altar on which was inscribed, ‘To the unknown god.’ Therefore, the one you worship as unknown, him I proclaim to you.”⁷¹

You see how those who were leaders of the people, who were their shepherds and instructors, could scarcely move the heavy stone away from the well. Considering themselves to be godly through their reverence for the divine, they erred greatly regarding the truth. For they had dedicated an altar on which the words were inscribed, “To the unknown god,” that is, to the deity who was not known. Yet they maintained that they held noble views concerning God. Now the divine Paul put this inscription to good use, and with great skill he led them to what was needful, namely that the God who was unknown to them was Christ. “The one you worship as unknown,” he tells them, “him I proclaim to you.” You see how he opened up the well, having rolled away the stone, and how he pointed them to life-giving knowledge. So the wisdom displayed by the shepherds is incomparably different. Those Greeks, though being very many, pursued the true notion of God, and yet, overcome by the obscurity of the doctrines, they erred in their opinions. Paul, however, though alone, set forth the truth.

Jacob rolled away the stone alone, and watered the sheep under Rachel’s care. Yet he also considered the girl to be lovable, for it says that he kissed [201] Rachel. He soon made himself known to Laban, who welcomed him into his home. Laban reckoned his sister’s son as being worthy of love and acceptance, and considered him as one of his close relatives, for he said, “*You are indeed my bone and my flesh!*”

Now “Rachel” means “sheep of God.”⁷² So one might most

71. Acts 17.22–23.

72. More precisely the Hebrew name Rachel means “ewe.”

reasonably take her as being a figure of the church taken out from among the Gentiles. For she is the sheep of Christ that is now joined to the earlier flocks, and enclosed within the sheep-folds of the Savior. This is why he said, "I have other sheep which are not of this fold. I must lead them also, and they will hear my voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd."⁷³

So the divine disciples also shepherded the church of Christ, by which is meant the spiritual sheep, and they became her friends and marriage negotiators, "presenting her to God as a pure virgin,"⁷⁴ "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but rather holy and blameless."⁷⁵

5. From the words of Laban we also understand that the Israelites originated from among the Gentiles, like the sprouting forth of the first shoots from the root. For a man who was an idolater embraced Jacob, and said that he was born to one of his close relatives, evidently meaning Rebekah, and he called him his own flesh and bone. The divine Abraham was, in fact, called when he was uncircumcised, having been brought up in the land of Chaldea according to pagan customs and laws. "He received circumcision as a sign, a seal of the faith he had while uncircumcised," as it is written.⁷⁶

Israel the firstborn, then, was a kinsman to those Gentiles, and yet they were set apart by the law, so as to be considered different. In Christ, however, the two have become one. For he removed the dividing wall, having annulled the law with all its writings and the distinguishing mark of circumcision. We have been made into one new man,⁷⁷ the Gentiles sharing in the same body and soul as the people of Israel.

It can also be seen that we have surely been brought together in such a way through communion in the Spirit, for Christ said to God the Father in heaven, "I desire that as you and I are one, they also might be one in us."⁷⁸ He is our peace, having broken

73. Jn 10.16.

74. 2 Cor 11.2.

75. Eph 5.27.

76. Rom 4.11.

77. Cf. Eph 2.14-15.

78. Cf. Jn 17.21.

down the dividing wall, as I just said, and having removed what separated us, joining us together in unity through the Spirit. So then, the fact that Laban embraced Jacob and acknowledged him to be his own bone and flesh is an especially clear representation of the spiritual oneness of the two peoples by means of faith.

In addition to the foregoing, let us now speak of another matter that we derive from the sacred Scriptures. It says, *Laban said to Jacob, "Just because you are my relative, you will not serve me for nothing. Tell me what your pay will be."* Now Laban had two daughters. The name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah's eyes were weak,⁷⁹ but Rachel was fine-looking with an extremely beautiful face. Jacob loved Rachel and said to Laban, "I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter." Laban said to him, "It is better that I give her to you than to some other man. [204] Stay with me." So Jacob served seven years for Rachel. Yet they seemed to him to be just a few days because of his love for her. Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife that I may go into her, for my time is completed." So Laban gathered all the men of that place and made a marriage feast. When it was evening, Laban took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and Jacob went in to her. Laban also gave Zilpah his servant girl to Leah his daughter to be her maidservant. Now when it was morning, behold there was Leah! So Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve you for Rachel? Why, then, have you deceived me?" Laban said, "It is not done in our country, to give the younger before the elder. Finish the marriage-week⁸⁰ for this daughter, and I will give you the other also in return for another seven years of service for me." Jacob did so, and completed that marriage-week; then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as his wife. Laban gave Bilhah his servant girl to Rachel his daughter to be her maidservant. Then Jacob went into Rachel, and he loved Rachel more than Leah. Then he served Laban for another seven years.⁸¹

79. The original significance of this is uncertain. It might indicate that she was unattractive. Alternatively, some modern English Bible versions interpret this as a positive feature (e.g., NRSV, "Leah's eyes were lovely"; NJB, "Leah had lovely eyes").

80. Lit. "her sevens." This might alternatively refer to the period of seven years.

81. Gn 29.15–30.

6. The matters arising out of the literal account ought not to require any explanation for there is nothing at all difficult among them, except that someone might say they would like to learn more precisely about the customs found there. We do not in fact consider it too irrelevant to first attend to the issue of being married to two people and of living with two wives, who were sisters at that! In response to these matters we say that for those of long ago the whole purpose of life was to produce many children, and what is more, the most important thing of all was reckoned to be prosperity. So one was free from all blame if one slept with not just two wives but even with many more, so as to expand one's posterity into an innumerable multitude. Accordingly, they took the birth of children to be in the highest order of blessing from God. Furthermore, the Master of all himself promised both the saints of old who lived before Moses and those who were under the tutelage of the law that he would grant them the gift of offspring. For he said, "There shall not be any one childless nor a widow⁸² among the people of Israel."⁸³ We do not receive this saying as belonging to the category of law, but rather we say that it is a promise. There are certain things, as presented in these laws, which relate to us, and properly so. There are matters, however, that do not relate to us, but they are that sort of laws which have come to a complete end, in which case the law has no authority. It is evident, then, and not in the least bit obscure, that the Maker did not issue it by way of a command that there should be no barrenness or childlessness among the people of Israel. But rather, if they were observant of the law, they would prove to be fruitful, as God had promised. Surely then, for those of ancient times, to have many children was considered to be a matter of honor and one of great seriousness.

As for us, however, we are transformed in Christ, so that we should rather be fruitful in the Spirit. Without dishonoring marriage, we choose that life which greatly exceeds this, and which, in the judgment of the inspired Scripture, bears a much more excellent crown. [205] This, I say, is to live without distrac-

82. Var. "nor barren" (as LXX).

83. Cf. Ex 23.26; Dt 7.14.

tion, to wait upon God, and not to be concerned about worldly things. “For the unmarried man,” Paul says, “is concerned about the things of the Lord, but the married man about the things of the world, how to please his wife, and so he is divided.”⁸⁴

7. This discussion of these matters will suffice us. Let us now come, through applying our minds to spiritual contemplations, to something that is very appropriate for us to consider. Let us take a look at how the labor of the holy apostles in preaching was not without reward, nor was their effort unrecompensed. For Laban said to Jacob, “*You will not serve me for nothing.*” The divine disciples in fact deemed the multitude of believers in former times to be the cause of the most wondrous rejoicing.⁸⁵ Paul, for instance, addressed them as “My joy and crown.”⁸⁶

Now I judge it to be necessary to make mention of the most useful matters that we have received from those early times. I said that the figure of Jacob, considered spiritually, sometimes stands for the band of the holy apostles, who were the firstfruits of those sanctified in the Spirit and justified by faith. He also stands for Christ himself, who was the firstfruits of a renewed humanity destined for incorruption, the firstborn among many brothers, a second Adam, a second root of the human race coming after the first. So then, the discourse always turns to the object to be considered spiritually, as it is appropriate to do. Indeed, the failure to apply the proper reasoning leads to a much less refined explanation of these spiritual considerations.

So what was figured by the person of Jacob is now taken up by Emmanuel. He is the heavenly bridegroom, who not without considerable effort has taken the daughters of Laban. It especially pertains to the most supreme Being of all to succeed in a matter without any effort at all. And this he might choose to do. In one place the blessed prophet Isaiah said concerning him, “He will not become hungry, nor grow weary, and his understanding is unsearchable.”⁸⁷ For the Deity has no need with respect to anything, but he has full perfection in himself. He does

84. Cf. 1 Cor 7:34.

85. Lit. “glorying,” “boasting.”

86. Phil 4:1.

87. Is 40:28.

not receive power from anything outside of himself, nor does he get energy by means of physical food or drink. Rather, by his very nature he himself is power. Therefore, he establishes the heavens, and with authority he distributes the exercise of power to whomever he might choose.

Yet, while the Deity is not disposed by nature to experience pain, he is spoken of as if he did feel pain.⁸⁸ For he says in a certain place to the mother of the Jews, evidently meaning the synagogue, "You have caused me pain in all these things."⁸⁹ The divine Paul also writes in a certain passage, "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God who dwells within you."⁹⁰ Although he is said to suffer in this way, we claim with regard to this that it is not the case that he feels pain.⁹¹ It is rather that, when he accomplishes the most exalted and remarkable things, he undertakes these as though he were wont to suffer. These are things that would evidently entail the enduring of terrible and bitter pain, if it were any one of us.⁹²

Moving on from such human notions to loftier considerations, we shall examine the attention that the pure Being gives to us, which is performed, one could almost say, with great exertion and sweat.⁹³ At all events, we shall of necessity set aside⁹⁴ [208] the question of his experiencing pain, since it is not the same as it is with us, but rather he is over all creation, dwelling in his own excellencies and being in full possession of them.

So then, it was not without reward, yet neither without effort, that Christ gathered first the synagogue of the Jews, which we take as being represented by the figure of Leah. She is under-

88. In this sentence and in what follows, the verb *lupein* may have the sense of either "cause pain" or "grieve."

89. Ezek 16.43.

90. Eph 4.30. Cf. Rom 8.9; 1 Cor 3.16.

91. Here and in what follows Cyril uses terms (*ponos*, *ponein*) that bear the sense of both "pain" and "labor." According to his understanding, for God to exert himself in labor would be, in a sense, for him to experience pain, which is not possible.

92. Or "if he were somebody like us."

93. In a clause that does not allow literal translation, Cyril compares the exertions with "drunken raving."

94. Or "dismiss."

stood as toiling, and then as being made new. She toiled when she was harshly oppressed by the Egyptians, bearing a heavy yoke of slavery. And she was made new with respect to the worship conducted by the forefathers. For she was reformed when she was brought out from idol-mad worship to know him who is truly God by nature. For he declared to the Israelites through Moses: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one Lord,” and, “You shall have no other gods besides me.”

Yet in the beginning Christ in fact desired Rachel, that is, the church gathered out from the Gentiles. Therefore, with regard to the synagogue of the Jews, he said to that teacher of spiritual truths, Moses, “I have spoken to you once and again, saying, ‘I have seen this people, and indeed, they are a stiff-necked people. Let me alone that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under the expanse of heaven. And I will make you a great and mighty nation, more numerous than they.’”⁹⁵ It was, however, necessary for those who still had inconstant and easily moved minds not to be brought hastily to perfection and to the teaching that exceeded the mind and discernment of Moses, by which I mean that of the gospel. Rather, they first needed to be instructed through lesser things, and for the instruction under the law to be in effect a preparatory training for life in Christ.

In the beginning, therefore, the heavenly bridegroom desired the younger woman, that is, the church gathered from the Gentiles. He, however, first took to himself the elder, and that not without effort, since Jacob had to serve for Leah. That by many great exertions Israel was delivered from the toil of slavery under the Egyptians is obvious. The whole of creation in fact fought against them.⁹⁶ So then, the service of Jacob, which was in no way performed without toil, signified the fact that Israel would not be redeemed without considerable effort, and also the subsequent ministration set out in the law.

When the marriage-week⁹⁷ for the elder woman was fulfilled, Jacob took to himself Rachel, the younger woman, the one who was desired in the beginning. For the second woman, the Gen-

95. Dt 9.13–14.

96. Cyril here means the series of plagues that fell upon the Egyptians.

97. See n. 80 above.

tile church, the flock of God, was called in after the first. This is how Rachel is to be interpreted, as I said before. That Christ in a way also worked for her, the divine Jacob again demonstrated to us when he endured another seven years of labor for Rachel. For if it is admitted that he, the Son, experienced hard toil, although he was by nature God, how much more was this so in the persecution he suffered from Herod at the beginning, the plots of the Pharisees, the false accusations of the leaders, the spitting, the blows, the strikes upon his back, the drunken behavior of the soldiers, and finally his death upon the cross?

Laban's daughters, Leah and Rachel, were daughters of a man who was still an idolater. They were then called out [209] from the nations. The first was the synagogue of the Jews, even the divine Abraham⁹⁸ himself being of Gentile origins, and the second, younger one, following on after the first, is the church.

Now Leah's eyes were weak and feeble, while Rachel was fine-looking with an extremely beautiful face. Christ also said to the holy apostles with regard to the Jews, "Leave them alone; they are blind guides of the blind,"⁹⁹ but "Blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear."¹⁰⁰ And so the feebleness of the Jewish synagogue with respect to beholding the divine is suitably signified by means of Leah's eyes. Yet wisdom and prudence, and the wonderful abundance of understanding of those who are in Christ through faith, and also indeed the conspicuousness of their works, are all depicted beforehand by the beauty of Rachel. In one case, let the prophetic word proclaim to the mother of the Jews, "Behold, your eyes and your heart are no good."¹⁰¹ But in the other, let Christ call the church out from the Gentiles and let him say about her, "Your eyes are doves."¹⁰² For "he desired her beauty," as the psalmist says.¹⁰³

So then, Christ first took to wife the synagogue of the Jews,

98. Var. "Jacob."

99. Mt 15.14.

100. Mt 13.16.

101. Jer 22.17.

102. Song 1.15.

103. Ps 45.11 (44.12 LXX).

with Moses as the marriage negotiator and the angels as mediators. In the matter of the second wife, the Gentile church, the blessed Baptist was employed as a kind of mediator with regard to her. Accordingly, signifying to us this spiritual and divine marriage, he said, "He who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly on account of the voice of the bridegroom. Therefore, my joy has been made full. He must increase, but I must decrease."¹⁰⁴

Mercy and faithfulness were wedding gifts for the bride. For the one coming from above, the heavenly bridegroom, said through the mouth of the prophets to the church taken from the Gentiles, "I will betroth you to myself for ever; indeed, I will betroth you to myself in righteousness and justice, in mercy and compassion. I will betroth you to myself in faithfulness, and you will know the Lord."¹⁰⁵ As I said just now, he took to himself the elder woman before the Gentile church. The manner, however, of the betrothal and the strength of the union were not to be everlasting. For he also said elsewhere concerning her, "She is not my wife, and I am not her husband,"¹⁰⁶ and again, "I put into her hands a certificate of divorce."¹⁰⁷ She was cast off as one who had committed sexual immorality and who stands condemned of the grossest indecency. For he said in one place concerning her, "If a man divorces his wife, and she leaves him and becomes another man's wife, will she indeed return to him once more? Will not that woman be utterly defiled? You played the harlot with many shepherds,¹⁰⁸ yet you return to me, says the Lord. Raise your eyes, look before you, and see where you have been defiled. You sat for them by the wayside like a crow in the wilderness."¹⁰⁹ [212] You polluted the land with your immorality and wickedness. You had many shepherds who were a

104. Jn 3.29–30.

105. Hos 2.19–20 (2.21–22 LXX).

106. Hos 2.2.

107. Jer 3.8.

108. The Hebrew word underlying this rendering by the LXX may be read as "companions" (*rē'im*) or "shepherds" (*rō'im*).

109. Lit. "like a desolated crow." The Hebrew noun here could be understood as "crow" (*ōrēb*) or "Arab" (*ārāb*).

stumbling block to you. You had the countenance of a harlot, you acted shamelessly towards them all. Have you not called me your family, your father and the guide of your maidenhood? Will he be angry for ever?"¹¹⁰ These matters concern the elder sister. The younger Rachel, however, that is, the Gentile church, was betrothed to him permanently.

In saying "to myself,"¹¹¹ this may be understood in the following way. When he betrothed to himself the synagogue of the Jews, it was through Moses acting as a mediator. But when he was united with the church of the Gentiles, he invited her into this union with his own voice, appearing as a man, as one who lives upon the earth. He in fact granted what the bride asked for when she cried out, "Show me your face, and let me hear your voice."¹¹² For the people of old heard him speaking only through Moses or the prophets. In these last days of the world, however, the Son has spoken to us himself, as the wise Paul also testified.¹¹³

8. In addition to these matters, it is also worth examining the births of the sons of Jacob, to see how many there were and which women gave birth to which sons.

Leah, the first wife, gave birth to four sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah. Since Rachel was still barren and without child, being at a loss and extremely distraught, she used her wit to try to overcome the problem of her childlessness. She persuaded Jacob, saying, "*Here is my maidservant Bilhah. Go into her, and she will give birth upon my knees, so that I also may have children through her.*"¹¹⁴ When this had been carried out, two sons were brought forth to Jacob: Dan and Naphtali. Then Leah gave her own housemaid Zilpah to sleep with Jacob, so making him the father of two other sons: Gad and Asher.

What happened after this? It says, *Reuben went in the days of the wheat harvest and found mandrakes in the field which he brought to his*

110. Jer 3.1-5.

111. Cyril is referring back to the phrase in Hos 2.19 (2.21 LXX) cited above.

112. Song 2.14. Cyril has mistaken the speaker in the passage. Here, in fact, it is the man who addresses the woman.

113. Cf. Heb 1.2.

114. Gn 30.3.

mother Leah. Rachel said to Leah her sister, "Give me some of your son's mandrakes." But Leah said, "Was it not enough for you to take away my husband that you want to take my son's mandrakes as well?" Rachel said, "That's not the way it is. He can sleep with you tonight for your son's mandrakes." So when Jacob came in from the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, "You will come to me tonight, because I have hired you with my son's mandrakes."¹¹⁵ Then when this happened, Leah further gave birth to Issachar, and after that to Zebulun.

To these were then added the remaining number of sons coming from Israel. It says, *God remembered Rachel. The Lord heard her and opened her womb. She conceived and gave birth to a son for Jacob.* Rachel said, "God has taken away my reproach." She called his name Joseph, saying, "God has added"¹¹⁶ to me another son."¹¹⁷ Then she gave birth to Benjamin. This is what is also written about Rachel: *It happened that as he was nearing Chabrattha to go into the land of Ephratha, Rachel began to give birth, and it was a very hard labor. As she was giving birth with much difficulty, the midwife said to her, "Take courage; for you will have another son." Then as her [213] soul was departing (for she was dying), she called the child's name "Son of my pain."*¹¹⁸ But his father called him Benjamin.¹¹⁹ So when Rachel was dying through difficulty in childbirth, she wished to be delivered from that pain which is the common experience of us all.

This, then, was the birth of the sons of Jacob. What, however, the inner meaning of the things recorded might be, he himself knows who knows everything, as it is written, "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."¹²⁰ So let us ourselves make careful investigation¹²¹ and, as we are able, overcome the obscure earthiness present in these matters, and in attempting to do so, let us say to him who gives wisdom to the

115. Gn 30.14–16.

116. The name Joseph is derived from the Hebrew word "add."

117. Gn 30.22–24.

118. Hebrew: *Benoni*.

119. Gn 35.16–18.

120. Col 2.3.

121. Lit. "investigate with fine eyes."

blind, "Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things in your law."¹²²

Therefore (reminding you of the things I said earlier), Leah, the elder wife, can most suitably be likened to the synagogue of the Jews, while Rachel, we may take to be the church of the Gentiles. Having first laid down a foundation for faith by these words, we shall now build further upon this.

9. So Leah, the first wife, gave birth to four sons; then there were subsequently four other sons from the two maidservants Bilhah and Zilpah. Then Leah and Rachel divided between them the mandrakes found in the field by Reuben, and both of them became mothers. In addition to her first four sons, Leah gave birth to Issachar, the "reward," then Zebulun, which means "blessing" or "prosperity." Rachel gave birth to Joseph, the one "added" by God. Then after him, as she was dying, she bore Benoni, "the son of pain."

The first wife, who was older in age, produced for God the congregation of the Jews, that is, the synagogue. That God called sons those who were born from her, you can readily see when he says to Moses, "Israel is my firstborn son,"¹²³ and again speaking through Isaiah, "Hear, O heaven, and listen, O earth, for the Lord has spoken. I fathered sons and reared them, but they have rejected me."¹²⁴ Yet, through their forefathers, they were born from those who were free, upon whom God did not cast the yoke of the law. Even the divine Paul himself showed us the freedom of their forefathers when he said, "I was once alive without the law."¹²⁵ When he says "I," he is referring to the root of the race, tracing his origin back to the forefathers. Even though the Jews were born from those who were free, the fact that they would be placed under a yoke of bondage through the law is figuratively portrayed in the birth of the four sons from the maidservants.

Now also in these things there is a mystery. Those sons born from Bilhah, Dan and Naphtali, were ascribed to Rachel, while

¹²². Ps 119.18.

¹²³. Ex 4.22.

¹²⁴. Is 1.2.

¹²⁵. Rom 7.9.

those born from Zilpah, Gad and Asher, were ascribed to Leah, and were born later than the sons of Bilhah. I suppose one might strongly question, and it would be very reasonable to do so, how it is that the sons born to a slave, namely those from Bilhah, should be ascribed to Rachel, and yet also serve as a type of the church of the Gentiles. What can we say about this? We note that in ancient times the blessed prophets were, on the one hand, reckoned to be among [216] the children of the Jerusalem that was in servitude, yet, on the other hand, were in a way sons of the Gentile church. For they understood those things that pertained to the church, saying that it would be revealed and that in due course the mystery of Christ would shine forth. This they prefigured in countless different ways, bringing it, in effect, right before the eyes of the people of old.

Those who came after the prophets, still being born in bondage, did not accept Christ, the one who would grant them freedom. That those who lived earlier were better than those who came after them requires no effort to see. God says through the mouth of Isaiah, “How the faithful city of Zion, once full of justice, has become a harlot! Righteousness lodged in her—but now murderers!”¹²⁶ You see how she was once actually full of justice, that is to say, uprightness, and it says that Jerusalem, namely Zion, was the dwelling place of the righteous, yet in later times she was full of murderers.

10. One can very plainly see, if so desired, from the names of the sons that those born through Bilhah were in fact the church’s foster children, while those from Zilpah were its enemies. For the meaning of Dan is “judgment,”¹²⁷ and that of Naphtali “enlargement.”¹²⁸

This was the message given through the prophets—that Christ would judge the world in righteousness, and would bring about the condemnation of Satan, who gained the advantage over us and destroyed us, that he would save us and bring our hearts out from so much distress into a broad place, as it were,

126. Is 1.21.

127. Or “justice,” “vindication.” The Hebrew name “Dan” is correctly related to the idea of judgment.

128. Naphtali in fact means “wrestling” (cf. Gn 30.8).

and to show us no such grievousness ever again. For the blessed psalmist, as though assuming the role¹²⁹ of those in Christ sanctified by the Spirit, exclaimed, "I ran the way of your commandments, when you enlarged my heart."¹³⁰ And the most-wise Paul, writing to those believers of Corinth wishing to be unequally yoked, said, "We have spoken openly to you, O Corinthians; our heart is enlarged."¹³¹ You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your own affections.¹³² Now as a fair exchange—I speak as though to children—you also enlarge your hearts. Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers."¹³³

That the judgment given by Christ was right and just the blessed David himself, assuming the role of those who are maltreated, further makes clear, saying to Christ the Savior of all, "Rise up, O Lord, and attend to my judgment, to my cause, O my God and my Lord."¹³⁴ For the Savior himself makes this plain when he says, "Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."¹³⁵ Do you see, then, that the prophets, when speaking of the mystery pertaining to Christ, proclaimed ahead of time a future righteous judgment for us and an enlarging of our hearts?

So the sons of Bilhah were Dan and Naphtali, that is, "judgment" and "enlargement." The sons of Zilpah were Gad and Asher. The meaning of Gad is "testing," and that of Asher is "riches."¹³⁶ Were not the later people of the Jews, who came af-

129. *prosôpon*, literally "person," "face." Here is meant the more technical sense of "persona," "character."

130. Ps 119.32 (118.32 LXX). Here the verb "enlarge" (*platunein*) relates to "broad place" (*plateia*) shortly before.

131. Or "opened wide," as in most modern translations. Here the translation "enlarged" is retained to make clear the connection with Cyril's understanding of the name Naphtali as "enlargement."

132. These words admit of different translations. Other alternatives include: "There is no restriction in our affections, but only in yours" (NRSV), and "Any distress you feel is not on our side; the distress is in your own selves" (NJB).

133. 2 Cor 6.11–14.

134. Ps 35.23 (34.23 LXX).

135. Jn 12.31–32.

136. Asher in Hebrew relates to a word meaning "happiness" or "blessed-

ter the first, of such a kind? How could there be any doubt? One might in fact perceive this from those things that happened with regard to Christ. For the Jews, together with those called Herodians, tested him, saying, “Teacher, we know that [217] you are truthful and show no preference for anybody. For you do not regard people with partiality, but you teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay tax to Caesar, or not?”¹³⁷ They were there testing him, in order that they might trap him. Such is the testimony of the divine evangelist.

It was on account of profit and greed that these people did not accept the Son. For we are told that they said among themselves, “This is the heir. Come, let us kill him so that the inheritance might be ours.”¹³⁸ That the Pharisees, as well as that profane mass of scribes, were lovers of wealth and extremely greedy, one can very easily see by considering the things written about them. Our Lord Jesus Christ said that those who have chosen to set their minds on things above ought to sell their earthly riches and to distribute their possessions to the poor, that they might gain heavenly treasure. As the evangelist says, however, “The scribes and Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard these things and mocked him.”¹³⁹ These were eager to engage in subtle arguments with great attention to minute details, even going into the most insignificant of matters. Nor were they lenient with respect to those who did not bring the tithes prescribed by the law, and yet they themselves had little regard for the law. The Lord made this abundantly clear when he said to them, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you

ness” (cf. Gn 30.13). Gad has been interpreted by modern scholars as meaning either “good fortune” (cf. Gn 30.11 NRSV) or a “band” or “troop” of men (NKJV), either of soldiers or outlaws. It is perhaps significant that the Greek term here employed by Cyril, *peiratêrion*, has two distinct senses. Firstly, it may mean “testing,” as Cyril uses it. Secondly, however, it may indicate a “band of robbers.” Since this latter is in fact one of the actual meanings present in the Hebrew, it seems evident that Cyril obtained his interpretation of the names from a Greek source in which he found Gad interpreted as *peiratêrion*. In this his source was in all probability correct, yet Cyril mistakenly took the word in its other sense of “testing.”

¹³⁷. Mk 12.14.

¹³⁸. Mt 21.38; Mk 12.7; Lk 20.14.

¹³⁹. Lk 16.14.

tithe mint, dill, and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice, mercy, and faith."¹⁴⁰

So then, Gad indicates "testing," and Asher "riches." Both of these were born from the maidservant Zilpah after Dan and Naphtali, who were born from Bilhah. In these matters, however, the time before the coming of our Savior is described for us, during which Rachel, the Gentile church, was still barren. That she would give birth to many and would rear a countless number of children, Isaiah had in fact earlier proclaimed when he said, "Rejoice, O barren one, who bears no children. Cry out and shout, you who are not in labor; for the children of the desolate woman are more than those of the woman who has a husband."¹⁴¹ The divine David himself also said plainly with regard to God, "He settles the barren woman in a home, a mother rejoicing over her children."¹⁴² Also, the Master and God of all said to this barren woman in one place, "Lift up your eyes, look around and see them all,"¹⁴³ and again, "Behold, they come from afar, some from the north, and some from the west, and others from the land of the Persians."¹⁴⁴

Let us examine, as seems appropriate, at what point in time the barren woman gave birth to children in this way. Now after those sons were born to the maidservants, Reuben, the firstborn of Jacob, found the mandrakes in the field and brought them to Leah his mother. When Rachel asked for some, she gave them to her. Leah, having taken the mandrakes, gave birth to two more sons, Issachar and, of course, Zebulun. Then God remembered Rachel; her womb was opened, and she gave birth to Joseph and, last of all, to Benjamin.

So then, that Leah prefigures the Jewish synagogue [220] and Rachel the Gentile church, the word indicates to us many times. Since it is not profitable to go on repeating this fact, let us leave this matter, and let us now state what figurative meaning the mandrakes found by Reuben the firstborn might have. And

¹⁴⁰. Mt 23.23.

¹⁴¹. Is 54.1.

¹⁴². Ps 113.9 (112.9 LXX).

¹⁴³. Is 49.18.

¹⁴⁴. Is 49.12.

what should we suppose is the meaning intended by the distribution to both women equally? For Leah gave some to Rachel. And what about the matter of the births of the children and the mystery this brings forth in the meanings of their names?

11. Mandrakes grow out in the fields and have the appearance of apples. That they induce drowsiness and bring a deep drunken-like stupor upon those who partake of them, I think there is no need to demonstrate with many words. It is in fact sometimes the practice of doctors to use mandrakes as a natural remedy in treating those suffering from insomnia.

Mandrakes also give us in a figure a hint at the mystery of Christ, who in a certain manner fell asleep for us.¹⁴⁵ Coming down, he emptied himself even to the point of death, though he came to life again. For he was by nature God and became flesh. Where death is taken as actually being in the order of a sleep, it requires also a coming back to life. So it is as though the whole mystery of Christ were present in these things.

So too, the divine Paul lays it upon those who were taken away from what is easy to understand to a strange way of thinking, saying, "I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures."¹⁴⁶ And later, "If Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how do certain people among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?"¹⁴⁷ Since Christ was the first among men to show forth death as sleep (for he was by nature life), he henceforth became a door or path, as it were, being born in the nature of man in order to triumph over death. Accordingly, the most-wise Paul in various places speaks of those taken in death as having fallen asleep, as though they will presently also come back to life through Christ. Again he says, "For if we believe that Christ died and rose again, even so God will raise up with Jesus those who have fallen asleep, and will present them with us."¹⁴⁸

145. Sleep may have connotations of death (cf. Dn 12.2; 1 Cor 15.20).

146. 1 Cor 15.3–4; var. omit "according to the Scriptures."

147. 1 Cor 15.12.

148. 1 Thes 4.14; 2 Cor 4.14.

The mandrakes, then, signify sleep. These were found by Reuben the firstborn who brought them to his mother, and she shared them with her sister. Those of firstborn Israel, who came first in time, had a rich understanding of the mystery pertaining to Christ. When they brought to their own mother, Jerusalem, the wonderful discovery they had made through the discernment of their minds, they gave her reason to rejoice. For before the call of the Gentiles, the divine disciples instructed the Jews throughout all Judea in the mystery of Christ. Though it may be that not all of them believed, they¹⁴⁹ had the first contact with the message about Christ. Yet a remnant was in fact saved, as the Scriptures say.¹⁵⁰

That the Jews preceded the Gentiles in the matter of faith is absolutely clear and not in the least bit obscure. Having taken the mandrakes, Leah gave birth to two sons, Issachar and Zebulun. Issachar means "reward," while the other name, Zebulun, means "prosperity" or "blessing." [221] As I have already stated, through the holy apostles the synagogue of the Jews was, in effect, receiving the mystery of Christ from its own children. The mother was shown through the prospering of her children what it means to have a reward and blessing before God. For the forgiveness of our offenses directly proves that faith toward Christ is not without its reward. Our Lord Jesus Christ himself also confirmed this when he said, "Truly, truly, I tell you, he who believes in me has eternal life."¹⁵¹ The blessed Paul, too, says nothing less: "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that is, the word of faith which we proclaim. If you say with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and you believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."¹⁵² What, then, could be a greater or more precious reward than the preserving of one's soul? That this matter is more important and more excellent than every other thing, the Savior himself per-

149. Var. add "all."

150. E.g., Is 10.21; Rom 11.5.

151. Jn 6.47.

152. Rom 10.8-10.

suades us when he says, “What profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world yet loses his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”¹⁵³ The reward, then, is glorious salvation for those who believe.

That the blessing granted to those justified in Christ ought to be valued greatly cannot be doubted. We have indeed been sanctified by the Spirit. The blessed David says, “The blessing of the Lord be upon you. May you be blessed by the Lord, who made heaven and earth.”¹⁵⁴ Through Isaiah God also said to the mother of those who believe, namely the church, “I will put my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing upon your children.”¹⁵⁵ The most-wise Paul also wrote to those justified by faith, saying, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing.”¹⁵⁶ Those who partake richly of heavenly blessings, how can they not prosper in every good work? For “the way of the godly,” it says, “has been made straight, and the way of the godly has been prepared; for the way of the Lord is justice.”¹⁵⁷

Now concerning the synagogue of the Jews, God said in one place, “Behold, I will hedge up her ways, and she will not find her path.”¹⁵⁸ You, however, he brings into the heavenly places along a level path, like a road that has been cleared, and he instructs his holy ministers, “Open the gates, let the people that observes righteousness and proclaims truth enter, maintaining truth and keeping peace.”¹⁵⁹ And again he says, “Prepare a way for my people, and cast the stones out of the road,”¹⁶⁰ lest falling over stumbling blocks in the way they should shrink back from those good things they eagerly pursue.

So then, Leah gave birth to those made prosperous through a reward and blessings from God. Rachel likewise received the

153. Mt 15.26.

154. Ps 129.8 (128.8 LXX); 115.15 (113.23 LXX).

155. Is 44.3.

156. Eph 1.3.

157. Is 26.7–8.

158. Hos 2.6 (2.8 LXX).

159. Is 26.2–3.

160. Is 62.10.

mandrakes¹⁶¹ and gave birth to Joseph. The church, having received the [224] mystery of Christ through the holy apostles in a similar way to her sister, the Jewish synagogue, has shown herself to be the mother of a people always being added to, and so becoming an immeasurable multitude (for Joseph means "added by God"). The church of the Gentiles, then, is added to the flock of Israel. Accordingly, Christ also said, "I have other sheep, which are not of this fold. I must lead them also, and they will hear my voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd."¹⁶²

So to the former sheep, the flock taken out from the Gentiles has been added, as I just said, and they enjoy continual and unending bountiful increase, until in later times Benjamin himself is born, that is, the people who are the "son of pain."

12. Who, then, is this that ceases to bear any further children and who has, as it were, passed into another life? For Rachel died in the pangs of giving birth to Benjamin. To ascertain this precisely, we shall again refer ourselves to God, and also to those who have more understanding than we do. It then does no harm to speak what comes to mind.

I think, then, that the people who are the "son of pain" might suitably be interpreted as the multitude of believers at the end times of the world. For at that time there will be the son of lawlessness, "who opposes and exalts himself against all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he takes his seat like God¹⁶³ in the temple of God, declaring himself to be God."¹⁶⁴ Who, then, is this? He will oppose the saints and will be no different from wild animals. For as the Savior himself said, "There will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world¹⁶⁵ and never will be."¹⁶⁶ That the perversity and inhumanity of that one will fall upon no others but the saints, Christ himself clearly indicated when he added, "Unless

161. Var. add "from her."

162. Jn 10.16.

163. Var. omit "like God."

164. 2 Thes 2.4.

165. Var. "of creation."

166. Mt 24.21.

those days were shortened, no human being would be saved. Yet for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened."¹⁶⁷

For when persecution shall come against the faith of all who are elect and genuine believers, how terrible and unbearable will the violence be, and how lamentable the torments. That time, when the strength of those undergoing suffering is put to the test, will therefore, I believe, be greatly contracted and limited by the compassionate God. This is what the most-wise Paul encourages us to think when he says, "God is faithful, who shall not let you be tested beyond what you are able to bear, but with the trial he will also provide the way out, so that you can endure it."¹⁶⁸

So when Benjamin was born, that is, the people accompanied by pain and death, Rachel ceased to be.¹⁶⁹ For, as I said just now, the church passed into another life, meaning that we ourselves through faith in Christ have been richly blessed in our union with God through the Spirit. Do not be amazed that death brought about a change in Rachel with respect to the things of this world. For this matter at times confuses some when they are applying the spiritual meaning of what happened long ago. The church in fact will eventually cease to be and will in a certain manner be extinguished by death, this being the transference of the church to better things.

Concerning this we say the following. When you hear the word "church" [225], it means the holy company of believers. Dying may have respect to the fleshly way of life in the world. Such is the way to progress in one's conduct and life in Christ and the manner in which to be transported to better and more transcendent things. For this reason the blessed Paul fiercely rebukes some, saying, "If you have died to the basic principles¹⁷⁰ of the world, why do you submit to regulations as though you were still living in the world?"¹⁷¹ He further writes to those who have cast off the fleshly and pleasure-seeking life, "For you have

167. Mt 24.22.

168. 1 Cor 10.13.

169. Or "she rested."

170. Or "elemental spirits."

171. Var. omit "in the world"; Col 2.20.

died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, your life, appears, then you will also appear with him in glory.¹⁷² So, he plainly says, we must put to death our earthly members, meaning immorality and uncleanness, and things of that kind.

Surely then, the death of Rachel signifies that of the whole company of believers, namely the church. It is understood as dying in Christ and being transported, as it were, to another life, since it is indeed the case that our condition will be transformed from corruption to incorruption, from death to life, from weakness to power, from dishonor to glory, from finite time to endless life. It is in this state also that we shall continually be with Christ, through whom and with whom be glory and might to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

¹⁷². Col 3.3-4.

BOOK FIVE: GENESIS 30–35

Concerning Jacob



LT MANY TIMES and in many ways¹ the inspired Scripture set forth in advance figures of the salvation to come through Christ, thereby bringing considerable benefit to those reading it. Very much as those thoroughly trained in the skill of drawing make use of various forms involving many colors, bringing the shadows into clearer vision and much enhancing the elegance of what is drawn, so also God, the wise Artificer of all things, through many diverse glorious things foreshowed in a subtle manner² the beauty of the mystery. As a result, by perceiving the mystery in figures and by applying their understanding to this initial and introductory instruction, those being taught these things might be better prepared to receive the truth.

Now we spend our lives in this world differing little from, or perhaps even being inferior to, the irrational animals. For God directed a just rebuke [228] against the people of Israel when he said, “An ox knows its owner, and a donkey its master’s manger; but Israel does not know me, and my people do not understand.”³ If the Jewish people, who had the law as a tutor, were condemned for such dreadful ignorance, how much more accountable will the Gentiles be, upon whom the great darkness of the error of polytheism has fallen? Ever inclined towards what is base, and being caught up in fleshly desires, they hasten only after thoughts of earthly things. It cannot so much as be

1. Cf. Heb 1.1.

2. Or “in fine detail.”

3. Is 1.3.

said that they are capable of raising their minds⁴ to consider the wonders of love for God.

For this reason the blessed prophets, lamenting and weeping over us men, expended many thousands of words. For indeed the blessed Isaiah said, "The grave⁵ has enlarged its appetite, and opened its mouth without ceasing."⁶ For men did not turn away from evil, but Satan exercised his tyrannical power against us with unbearable harshness, and we wretched ones have descended into Hades, from which we need to be delivered. There death, finding us to be sinners, greedily devours and feeds upon us, so to speak.

Therefore, as I said earlier, it was not without tears that the divine David himself spoke of this plight. He once said this concerning us: "Like sheep they are placed in Hades; death will feed upon them."⁷ Then again he said, "Give heed, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a sheep; you who sit upon the cherubim, manifest yourself. Stir up your might, and come to save us."⁸ Consequently, not all of us remain under the hand of death. For God the Father sent to us from heaven the good shepherd, our Lord Jesus Christ, who does not feed in Hades upon those placed under his care, but rather leads them to life and incorruption. For he grazes his sheep among the lilies, in good pasture and in a fertile place, according to what is written.⁹ He sets before us spiritual fodder, making us intoxicated upon the springs of heaven and filling us with abundant fruit. He multiplies us, moreover, into an immeasurable multitude of peoples.

One may again observe how the divine Jacob portrays matters by means of shadows, which is the very thing I said. So the events written about him as presented in the word and those elements that seem obscure in the literal account we will make as clear as we are able.

4. Lit. "the eye of the mind"; var. "opening their eyes."

5. LXX has "Hades."

6. Is 5.14.

7. Ps 49.14 (48.15 LXX).

8. Ps 80.1-2 (79.2-3 LXX).

9. Cf. Ezek 34.14.

Now it is written here: *It happened that when Rachel had given birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away that I may go to my own place and my own land. Give me my wives and my children, for whom I have served you, so that I may leave. You know the service I have rendered you, and how your animals have fared under my care. For before I came you had little, and it has increased abundantly, and the Lord has blessed you since I arrived.*¹⁰ *So now, when shall I also make a house*¹¹ *for myself?" Laban said to him, "What shall I give you?" And Jacob said, "You shall not give me anything. If you will do [229] this one thing for me, I will still tend your sheep today and look after them. Let all your sheep pass by today,*¹² *and separate from among them every sheep that is spotted or dark, and every grey animal from among the rams, and also every one that is white and speckled from among the goats. These will be my reward. So my righteousness will answer for me in the future, when those animals which are my reward come before you. Whatever is with me that is not speckled or white among the goats, and whatever is not grey among the rams, will be considered stolen by me."* Then Laban said to him, "Let it be as you say." But that same day he separated the male goats that were speckled and white and all the female goats that were speckled and white, every animal that had white in it, and every grey animal from among the rams, and he put them in the care of his sons. Then he put a three-day journey between them and Jacob, while Jacob continued to tend the sheep of Laban that remained.¹³

We must again bring together into a short space the breadth of material found in the literal account, and further, we must discuss what appropriate meaning might be found in the spiritual contemplation of these things.

2. So the blessed Jacob served Laban for his two daughters, Leah and Rachel. Then after a long time had passed, Joseph was born to him from Rachel, the wife who was especially beloved. Following this, Jacob felt restless, and understandably so, as he wished to return to his own home as soon as possible. The

10. Lit. "at my foot" (see further below). See n. 14 below.

11. Here meaning "household" or "family." Since Cyril is presently to relate this term to the "house" of God in the sense of a temple, a literal rendering has been retained.

12. Var. omit "today."

13. Gn 30.25-26, 29-36.

reason given for his departure is not implausible. Jacob said, "For if I were going to tend your animals continually for no reward, when could I ever make a house for myself also?" That is to say, "When could I ever provide the necessities of life for my own children, and be called the master of my own house?" This is how it was with Jacob. Laban, on the other hand, wanted to hold on to Jacob, seeing that he was a good shepherd, and he said he had been blessed since Jacob's arrival. He would never let him go, therefore, even though the prescribed period of service for his daughters had come to an end.

So Laban promised to provide him with a pleasing reward. He openly affirmed that Jacob had been useful, capable, and most hard-working, and had moreover brought him a blessing from God, since Jacob said, "*God has blessed you since I arrived.*"¹⁴ Laban said these things anticipating what he would do. Then Jacob claimed his reward and promised to tend Laban's flocks. But Laban picked out and separated animals for himself from those that were marked, which were white and dark-colored. Jacob and his own children were some distance away with the flock allotted to him, yet he also continued to shepherd the rest of Laban's flock.

So what the plain meaning of these matters might be for us, and how the spiritual subtleties are to be made clear, it is now necessary to state.

3. First of all, we can say without any doubt that Jacob stands for Christ himself,¹⁵ for Christ is the true "one who overcomes,"¹⁶ in that he utterly trampled upon sin. And as it is understood, he appeared as a man, being younger and born later than those who came before him, by which I mean the holy prophets and Moses. Nevertheless, he possesses the privileges of the elder and is the firstborn on account of his being the Only-Begotten among many brothers. He is himself the one blessed by the [232] Fa-

14. Cyril here includes a brief explanation of the Hebraic idiom, which is literally "at my foot." He adds: "Instead of 'arrival,' 'foot' has been put."

15. Lit. "clothed with the face of Christ."

16. Cyril uses the Greek term (*pternistês*) that relates to the name of Jacob, meaning "one who grasps the heel [*pterna*]," that is, one who supplants or gets the better of another (cf. Gn 25.26).

ther through an abundance of wheat and wine.¹⁷ The nations serve him, and the rulers bow down to him. He who curses him is accursed, but he who blesses him is blessed, according to the blessing of Isaac.¹⁸

Christ is the one who left heaven, just as Jacob left his father's home. And he came to Laban, who may be likened to the world, to one who never knew the true nature of God, to one very much plagued with the error of polytheism, for Laban was an idolater. The world was indeed Christ's own, since he is also understood to be in very nature God and the Lord and Maker of all. Yet the world is not any more his own because of man's apostasy and it seems now to belong to another on account of sin. It is Satan who is in fact upheld as king.

So the Word came down from heaven, having left, as it were, his Father's home, as I just said. He was like a stranger in his own world. To this, the wise John bears witness when he says, "He was in the world, and the world was made through him, but the world did not know him."¹⁹ While this may perhaps be well applied to the time when he resided among us, even before his Incarnation among his own creation, while he was God, he was unknown to the world. Yet he still enacted for us his providential care out of his natural goodness and divine kindness. This the divine Jacob, being himself a type, directly showed forth. For Jacob tended Laban's sheep, even though he had absolutely nothing from him as a reward. Yet, having been led to be joined in marriage to Laban's two daughters, Leah and Rachel, and having become the father of his own rightful children, the one thing he had was hope.

Now the Son, being by nature God, was in the world, which is represented by Laban. And, being God, he was, in a certain manner, tending²⁰ to humankind and administering the necessities of life, giving produce from the earth, sending forth streams of water and flowing rivers, making the sun to rise, and

17. Cf. Gn 27.28.

18. Cf. Gn 27.29.

19. Jn 1.10.

20. Cyril here uses a verb (*katepomaine*), probably of his own invention, related to shepherding.

sending down the rains, according to what is written.²¹ He places within human nature an innate understanding, for he himself is "the true light which gives light to every man coming into the world."²² He carried out these things, as I said, only on account of his natural kindness, and he received at that time nothing by way of a reward from those in the world—no praise, no worship, no right notions or any sure understanding of himself. He foreknew, however, that he would in time have two wives who would be mothers of his own rightful children, to whom in a spiritual sense they would give birth. And who were these women? The first was Leah, the elder, who is a type of the synagogue of the Jews. A short while later came the second, the much-longed-for Rachel, the younger, who is the church of the Gentiles. And Rachel gave birth to Joseph, meaning "added by God," for the company of the Gentiles has been added to those of Israel. In other words, the interpretation relates to the eventual adding of others to the immeasurable multitude of believers.

Take note of this, for the detail present in these matters is extremely profitable. Leah gave birth before Rachel, and then the two maidservants Bilhah and Zilpah did so. [233] During this time Jacob kept quiet,²³ and as yet had no plans for making his own house. Then Rachel gave birth to Joseph, following which Jacob desired his own house. He asked, "*When, then, shall I make a house for myself?*" For indeed the synagogue of the Jews had given birth to those who were in bondage under the law.

Evidently, Christ allowed that he would not at that time have his own house, since he did not in fact greatly approve of the stone temple that Solomon built. On that account the Lord once severely rebuked the insolent Jews over this temple, saying, "Heaven is my throne, and earth is the footstool under my feet. What kind of house will you build for me? What will the place of my rest be?"²⁴ Neither, however, was Israel the spiritual house of God, for he did not dwell among them. Yet once the Gentile church had given birth to the new people of God, that is, those

21. Cf. Mt 5:45.

22. Jn 1:9.

23. Or "remained inactive."

24. Is 66:1.

who were “added,” the Savior then prepared his own house for himself. And what house is this? It is we who have come to believe, about whom he says through the prophet, “I will put my law in their minds, and I will write it upon their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.”²⁵ So he dwells within us through the Spirit, as I just said, and not in Israel. That the Jews who lived before Christ’s advent did not partake of the Spirit the most-wise John, speaking in a manner corresponding to the type, would make clear in saying, “For the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.”²⁶

After Christ had been raised from the dead and set about reforming the nature of humankind in the divine image, he breathed upon the holy apostles first, saying, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”²⁷ The divine Paul also said in one place, “For you did not receive a spirit of bondage leading again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’”²⁸ Within Israel, then, there was a spirit of bondage. Yet within us who come forth from Rachel, from the church taken out of the Gentiles, there is the Spirit of God, which brings us to adoption as sons, making us into a spiritual house. So the offspring of Rachel are free.

Now Rachel’s eyes were fine and beautiful. Leah, however, did not have such good eyes, since the synagogue of the Jews does not see well. The most-wise Paul also bears witness to this when he says, “For until this very day the same veil remains over the reading of the old covenant. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it done away with. Even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies upon their hearts. But when anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. Yet we all,” he continues to say, “with unveiled faces, beholding²⁹ the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another, which comes from the

25. Jer 31.33.

26. Jn 7.39.

27. Jn 20.22.

28. Rom 8.15.

29. Or “reflecting.”

Lord, who is the Spirit.”³⁰ Do you understand that we behold the glory of the Lord with good eyes and unveiled faces? For, as I just said, Rachel’s eyes were bright.

When Rachel, the younger woman, had given birth to Joseph, the divine Jacob was then eager to go home. Laban, however, sought to keep him and [236] said he had been blessed through an enormous increase in his flocks. So the world is greatly in need of God. Even though perhaps it does not say this, it does know and concede that all the necessities of life and all good things are from God.

Now the blessed Jacob, no longer being able to stay for nothing, requested a reward. And the reward, namely the spotted and dark-colored animals, was not displeasing to him. Accordingly, even though right from the beginning he had been caring for the world out of his natural and divine kindness, the Word of God, through whom all things exist, allowed those in the world to walk in their own ways, as is written.³¹ Since the church has given birth to the new people of God, which is ever increasing, that is, those who have now received spiritual rebirth through faith in him, in return for his providence he is asking the world for the reward, as it were, of those who are most willing to believe, of whom the dark and spotted animals are figures.

What does this mean, then? Always among flocks of sheep and goats there are single-colored animals which are more valued by those who tend them. Those which are spotted and marked are of lesser worth and are not reckoned equal to the others. Their wool is not of a single color, but occurs in small alternate markings or is of different colors all mixed up. And so Christ receives from the world, not by any means those who are honored by it or valued among men, but rather he receives as many that are considered of low estate among them and those of less repute. The divine Paul also affirms this fact when he writes to the believers, “Consider your calling, brothers, that not many of you were wise according to human standards, and not many mighty, not many of noble birth. Rather, God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God chose the weak things of

30. 2 Cor 3.14–18.

31. Acts 14.16.

the world to shame the strong.”³² Looking at it in another way, should one wish to be more precise about such things, these are the dark and spotted ones. For those who are in Christ have a varied manner of attractiveness in both works and speech.

The grey and the black may in fact be reckoned as a figure and shadow of the mystery pertaining to Christ, and which many take as depicting some dark and obscure teaching³³ concerning him. For the divine David said somewhere in the book of Psalms, “He made darkness his covering, his tabernacle around him, dark water in the clouds of the air.”³⁴ It is as though it were likening the difficult nature of the doctrines about God to a tabernacle, specifically mentioning also the darkness and dark water in the clouds of the air. Yet Wisdom also promises to grant freely to certain people the ability to interpret parables and dark words, sayings of the wise, and obscure figures. So then, the depth and darkness of the doctrines relating to Christ are presented figuratively to us in the grey color. The other color, that is, the white, applies to what is manifest and, as it were, conspicuous, by which I mean godly deeds. Accordingly, the Master of all indicates ahead of time the cleansing by faith in Christ, saying through the prophet, “Learn to do good, seek justice, deliver the one who is wronged, [237] plead for the orphan, and obtain justice for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord. And though your sins be as crimson, I will make them as white as snow; and though they be as scarlet, I will make them as white as wool.”³⁵

So then, those of lower status in the world are special and highly valued in the sight of Christ the Savior of all. While being in a way inferior to others, and surpassed in glory, the spotted and those of different colors are to be interpreted spiritually as indicating the deep matters of the doctrines about God. These are rich with respect to dark meanings, and also especially bright and conspicuous in godliness.

Jacob’s reward, then, was the spotted animals. Now let us

32. 1 Cor 1.26–27.

33. *logon*, “word,” “account,” “message.”

34. Ps 18.11 (17.12 LXX).

35. Is 1.17–18.

carefully examine, if it so please, the way in which he managed to outwit Laban, and how he increased the number of the animals he obtained, and let us learn from the sacred Scriptures themselves. The account reads as follows: *Jacob took for himself fresh rods from the styrax tree, the almond, and the plane tree. And Jacob peeled them to make white stripes. As he tore away the green bark, the white stripes that he peeled became distinctly visible on the rods. Then he placed the rods that he had peeled among the channels of the watering troughs, so that whenever the sheep came to drink, coming before the rods to drink, the sheep would mate by the rods. The sheep gave birth to white, multicolored, dark, and spotted young. Jacob separated the lambs, and he set a white ram before the sheep, and every multicolored one among the lambs. He set flocks aside for himself and did not mix them with the sheep of Laban. So at the time when the sheep mated, conceiving in the womb, Jacob put the rods before the sheep at the water channels, so that they would mate by the rods. But he did not bring them indiscriminately whenever the sheep gave birth.*³⁶ *So the insignificant sheep were Laban's, while the notable ones were Jacob's. In this way the man became exceedingly rich.*³⁷

We know with respect to the profession of shepherding that sheep and goats give birth to young that resemble themselves in every way, and also that the colors which their offspring end up having are the same as what is being looked at in the act of conceiving. It appears that in some way this happens according to the operation of natural laws. Yet words cannot at all explain such things, and our minds are not able to grasp them.

Now the divine Jacob considered the dark and the spotted animals as valuable according to a divine revelation. For he said to Leah and Rachel, *"It happened that when the sheep were breeding and were pregnant, I saw with my eyes in a dream, and behold, the he-goats and the rams, those that were white, multicolored, dark, and spotted, were mounting the she-goats and the sheep. And the angel of God said to me in a dream, 'Jacob.' And I said, 'What is it?' And he said, 'Lift up your eyes and see the he-goats and the rams mounting the sheep*

36. The meaning of the LXX version of this sentence, which Cyril quotes precisely, is difficult to determine.

37. Gn 30:37-43.

and the she-goats, those male animals which are white, multicolored, dark, and spotted.”³⁸ Thus says the sacred Scripture.

Leaving the lower sense of the literal interpretation, let us come now to spiritual matters.

4. A rod figuratively portrays to us Emmanuel once again, for he is specifically so named by the [240] inspired Scripture. The divine Isaiah says, “And a rod will come forth from the root of Jesse, and a blossom will come up from his root.”³⁹ Indeed, the divine David, assuming the role⁴⁰ of those who believe, declared to God the Father in heaven, “Your rod and your staff, they have comforted me.”⁴¹ We have now in fact received comfort in Christ, and we have made him our support. For it is written, “The Lord will uphold the righteous.”⁴²

For us spiritual sheep and goats throughout the whole of the inhabited world, Christ presents himself in a certain fashion as a rod—indeed, not merely a rod, but one from *the styrax tree, the almond, and the plane tree*. A tree stands for the uprightness of those things to which testimony is being given. The styrax tree is a symbol of death, for the body which has died is treated with aromatic spices, and the styrax is the most pleasant of spices. So it was that Christ died for us and was buried according to the Scriptures.⁴³ The almond is a symbol of waking⁴⁴ and watchfulness, for by nature it has such an effect upon us. So it was that Christ was raised up for us. For he was not restrained by the gates of Hades, neither was he wholly overcome by the bonds of death. The wood of the plane tree further indicates the passage-way upwards, that is to say, the ascension of Christ into heaven, since the plane grows higher than the tallest of trees. So the Son was exalted into the presence of the Father, for Peter said

38. Cf. Gn 31.10–12.

39. Is 11.1.

40. *prosôpon*, literally “person,” “face.” Here is meant the more technical sense of “persona,” “character.”

41. Ps 23.4 (22.4 LXX).

42. Ps 37.17 (36.17 LXX).

43. Cf. 1 Cor 15.3–4.

44. The word used here (*egrêgorsis*) is a close cognate of terms denoting the idea of resurrection.

that he has been "exalted to the right hand of God."⁴⁵ Paul, too, said he has been greatly exalted and has received "the name that is above every name," and receives worship from all.⁴⁶

If one wishes, he may interpret the plane tree in another way. And what way is that? Those who concern themselves with the etymologies of words say that it is because the leaf is extremely wide that the plane tree is so called. Now we too, growing up out of Christ, are in effect made wide⁴⁷ through faith and love. Yet the law of the Jews is extremely narrow. The thinking also of those who practice idolatry is greatly limited. Accordingly, through the mouth of the prophet God declares to those of the flocks taken from among the Gentiles, "Learn to hear, you who are straitened."⁴⁸ And to the Corinthians, who chose to sink back into the ancient error⁴⁹ after experiencing the wideness of the faith, Paul writes and says, "Our mouth has spoken openly to you, O Corinthians; our heart is wide open. You are not straitened by us, but you are straitened in your own affections. Now in return (I speak as to children), open wide your hearts also. Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship is there between light and darkness? Or what agreement does Christ have with Belial?"⁵⁰ The psalmist also does away with the narrowness of the law when in the Spirit he says to Emmanuel, "Your commandment is exceedingly broad."⁵¹ Again he says, "I ran the way of your commandments, when you enlarged my heart."⁵² Further still, he says, "I walked in a wide place, because I sought your commandments."⁵³ Also, that the

45. Acts 2.33.

46. Cf. Phil 2.9-11.

47. The verb "we are made wide" (*platonometha*) is related to the noun for plane tree (*platanos*).

48. Is 28.19-20. The verb "straitened" (*stenochôroumenoi*) contains an element related to the adjective "narrow" (*stenos*).

49. That is, polytheism.

50. 2 Cor 6.11-15.

51. Ps 119.96 (118.96 LXX).

52. Ps 119.32 (118.32 LXX); "enlarged" may equally be translated "widened."

53. Ps 119.45 (118.45 LXX).

almond rod is [241] a natural cause of wakefulness,⁵⁴ as I said just now, God says to the prophet Jeremiah: “What do you see, Jeremiah?” And he said, “A rod of an almond tree.” Then the Lord said to him, “You have seen well, for I am watching over my words to perform them.”⁵⁵

So then, Christ presents himself to us in the form of a rod which is to be interpreted as one who died and rose again, as one exalted into heaven, and as one who through the Spirit makes wide in a spiritual sense the hearts of those who receive him.

But where did Jacob place the rods? Among the watering troughs. And these troughs and watering places of the spiritual⁵⁶ herd—us, that is—may be understood as the writings of Moses and the prophetic declarations, as the word that all but bursts forth to us from God above. For it is written, “And you shall draw water with joy from the wells of salvation.”⁵⁷ There we will find Emmanuel, the rod of power, who by his death for us is also the firstborn from the dead and is exalted in glory, and who increases the number of believers, as I just said. All the words of the holy prophets and of Moses hint at the mystery of Christ. Therefore, the wise Paul also says, “Christ is the end of the law and the prophets.”⁵⁸

Furthermore, Jacob peeled white stripes in the rods by pulling off the green. And so the animals next to them conceived a multicolored offspring. Christ in a way pulls off the shadow from the law, and the veil from the prophetic writings. Thus, revealing to us the pure⁵⁹ and quite striking doctrine contained within them, he imparts to it a spiritual fragrance. Moreover, he leads people to conceive virtue, those who wish to be multicolored, that is to say, to practice a double virtue in both word and deed. And so the divine prophets of those justified by faith,

54. Or “watchfulness.”

55. Jer 1.11–12. The Hebrew contains a verbal pun on “almond” (*šāqēd*) and “watching over” (*šōqēd*).

56. Although the adjective *logikos* has the basic meaning of “rational,” it may also convey the more specialized sense of “spiritual,” as in Rom 12.1 (“spiritual service”) and 1 Pt 2.2 (“spiritual milk”).

57. Is 12.3.

58. Rom 10.4.

59. Lit. “whitened.”

delving beneath the surface,⁶⁰ clearly proclaim, "Because of the fear of you, O Lord, we have conceived and been in labor, and we have brought forth the breath of your salvation."⁶¹ The blessed Isaiah in another passage characteristically says, "Be strong, you weak hands and feeble knees. Comfort one another, you faint-hearted; be strong, do not fear. Behold, our God renders judgment, and he will render it."⁶² And again, "Behold, the Lord is coming with strength, and his arm with authority. Like a shepherd he will tend his flock; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and comfort those with young."⁶³ That is to say, he will be a spiritual comfort for those already laboring with the divine word, that they should be fruitful, and for those about to bring forth the glories of a gospel life. For this is the fruit of a holy and undefiled soul.

It says that Jacob set apart flocks for himself and did not mix them with the sheep of Laban. For what is profane is liable to affect that which is holy, and what is dirty that which is clean. Now those who belong to Christ are set apart and refuse to mix together with those of the world, having been set free from all love of the flesh. They are not insignificant [244] with respect to this life, but are most noteworthy on account of their virtue. For it says, *the insignificant sheep were Laban's, while the notable ones were Jacob's*.

Yet Jacob was envied. Once they saw that he was rich and successful, Laban's sons were consumed with jealousy. Jacob therefore planned to take his leave and to go back again to his father's home. For it is written: *The man became exceedingly rich, and had many flocks, oxen, male and female servants, camels, donkeys, and mules.*⁶⁴ *Now Jacob heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, "Jacob has taken everything belonging to our father and has gained all this splendor from what was our father's."*⁶⁵ And Jacob noticed Laban's atti-

60. Lit. "running under the face." Cf. the rendering in Migne's Latin column: *figuram prae se ferentes aperte* ("openly bringing the image before themselves").

61. Is 26.18.

62. Is 35.3-4; var. add "which we have performed upon the earth" (as LXX).

63. Is 40.10-11.

64. Var. omit "mules."

65. Gn 30.43-31.1.

tude, and indeed it was not the same towards him as it had been before. Then the Lord said to Jacob, *“Return to the land of your father and to your relatives, and I will be with you.”*⁶⁶ So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field where his flocks were. He said to them, *“I can see that your father’s attitude towards me is not as it was before, but the God of my Father has been with me. You yourselves know that I have served your father with all my strength. But your father deceived me and changed my wages for the ten lambs.”*⁶⁷ Then he said, *“God has taken away all the livestock of your father and given them to me.”*⁶⁸ For indeed our Lord Jesus Christ has truly become rich, gathering his own worshipers together in the world as an immeasurable multitude, who are also a wonderful offering of good hearts⁶⁹ that are subject to him and who confess, “We are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.”⁷⁰

At these things, however, the sons of the world are not content to remain silent. Seeing their own father being robbed, as it were, and the hand of the good shepherd extending to the more notable among the sheep, which being brought to the birth by Christ also vary with regard to many different kinds of virtues, these sons of the world grumble and say, *“Jacob has taken everything belonging to our father and has gained all this splendor from what was our father’s.”* And they were by no means speaking falsely, for their words are true. Christ has in fact gathered to himself all those in the world; having enclosed in his own folds the flocks of those who have come to believe, he has riches befitting God and the most excellent glory. For in one place he himself said to God the Father in heaven, “All that is mine is yours, and all that is yours is mine, and I am glorified in them.”⁷¹

So we also note Jacob’s reward.⁷² *He had*, it says, *many flocks, oxen, male and female servants, camels, and donkeys.* You see Christ, too, gathering people from every race, according to what is writ-

66. Gn 31.3.

67. Contextually, the LXX reading “for the ten lambs” makes little sense. The Hebrew here reads “ten times.”

68. Gn 30.43–31.9.

69. Lit. “mind” or “thinking” (*dianoia*).

70. Ps 95.7 (94.7 LXX).

71. Jn 17.10.

72. Var. “wealth.”

ten: "The kingdom of heaven⁷³ is like a net which is cast into the sea, and which gathers in some of every kind."⁷⁴ He takes in the slave in order that he might make manifest glorious freedom. He takes in those under the law who in a way are already holy [245] and suitable for becoming a spiritual sacrifice, having as it were the place of an ox, in order that, having brought them into the brilliance of the gospel way of life, he might make them holier still. Moreover, he takes in the unholy and unclean, who have the place of a camel or a donkey, so to speak, in order that, having refined them from the impurity of the error of polytheism, he might join them cleansed and sanctified to the assembly⁷⁵ of the saints.

Therefore, since Laban's sons were moved to envy, and since Laban himself also began to look downcast and sullen, and his countenance was filled with jealousy—"his attitude," it says, "*was not the same as it had been before*"—God commanded Jacob to return to his own family. So he sent for his wives, Leah and Rachel, and openly told them of the wrong done by their father. Then he further said, "*God has taken away all the livestock of your father and given them to me.*"⁷⁶ Rachel and Leah answered and said to him, "*Is there still any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? Are we not considered strangers by him? For he has sold us and completely consumed our money. All the wealth and glory which God has taken away from our father will be ours and our children's; now, then, do whatever God has said to you.*"⁷⁷

Now while the world and its children show a sad countenance because of Christ, comfort from heaven above, that is, from the Father, is given to the brides of the Savior, namely to the churches. Yet this comfort comes through the Son, conveying to us, as it were, words from the Father, for "he whom God has sent speaks the words of God," as John states.⁷⁸

Note how God spoke to Jacob and then Jacob in turn spoke to his brides, Leah and Rachel. The word of comfort was that

73. Var. "of God."

74. Mt 13:47.

75. Lit. "choirs."

76. Gn 31:9.

77. Gn 31:14-16.

78. Jn 3:34.

they should depart from their father's household together with their own bridegroom. So the blessed psalmist says to the church in the Spirit, "Listen, O daughter, consider and incline your ear. Forget your people and your father's house, because the king has desired your beauty. He is your lord, and you will bow down to him."⁷⁹

Jacob, therefore, spoke to his brides of the matters he had heard from God. And what were Jacob's words? They were an indictment of Laban—how he had been unjust and wicked, and how when a reward was owed he had been slow to pay it. Christ himself also indicts the world of exceedingly great dullness of heart, since it refuses to render thank offerings to him who is Master, and has no desire to bring spiritual offerings, namely faith and love, by way of a debt and repayment for the care he gives it. All things, however, have come into his possession, God the Father drawing them to him. For in a certain place the Son said to him, "Those you have given me out of the world were yours, and you gave them to me."⁸⁰ This, then, is what "*God has taken away all the livestock of your father and given them to me*" was referring to.

So the chaste brides of the Savior are commanded to follow him willingly, and he says they had been sold to him, as it were, out of [248] the world. For with his own blood Emmanuel has bought the churches, and they have long since been separated from their father. There is no share or portion for them in the world, out of which they have been called. Rather, they and their children have riches that surpass all reason and understanding. They are granted a portion and lot, glory and praise, and everything whatsoever that leads to splendor and prosperity.

Therefore, the world and its children are downcast over Christ. When they see the extent of his glory, and how he makes everything under heaven subject to himself, and how he has dominion over the earth, they are consumed with burning jealousy. As they grumble about these things and denounce them, their frenzy against him increases. They even commit acts of persecution and murder; such is the force of their endeavors with

79. Ps 45.10–11 (44.11–12 LXX).

80. Jn 17.6.

which they oppose the glory of the Savior, and of the hostility that they show towards the churches under his authority, and towards his children, that is, the multitude of believers. Such a thing is not hard to see for those who care to learn from the events that follow.

It says, *Then Jacob arose, put his wives and his children upon camels, took all his possessions and all the household baggage that he had acquired in Mesopotamia, and everything that belonged to him, and left to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan. Now when Laban had gone to shear his sheep, Rachel stole her father's idols. Then Jacob set out secretly from Laban the Syrian, and did not tell him that he was running away. So he fled with all that belonged to him. He crossed the river and hurried to Mount Gilead. On the third day Laban the Syrian was told that Jacob had fled. So taking all his kinsmen with him, he pursued Jacob for a seven-day journey and caught up with him at Mount Gilead. But God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream at night, and said to him, "Be careful that you do not say anything evil to Jacob." So Laban caught up with Jacob. Jacob pitched his tent on the mountain, and Laban placed his kinsmen on Mount Gilead.*⁸¹

When Laban met up with the divine Jacob, he greatly criticized him for having fled secretly, and for having, in effect, stolen his daughters and also his household gods. Laban said to him, *"Now you have gone away because you so desired to leave for your father's house, but why did you steal my gods?"*⁸² Yet Jacob did not know, it says, *that Rachel his wife had stolen them.*⁸³ Then Laban looked for his gods, but he did not find them with Leah, nor in the tents of the maidservants Bilhah and Zilpah. When Rachel knew that she would be searched by her father, she outwitted him in a most elegant way. For it says that *she took the idols and put them inside the saddle of a camel and sat upon them.*⁸⁴ She said to her father, *"Do not be displeased, sir, that I am not able to stand up before you, because the way of women is upon me."* So Laban searched the whole of Jacob's household, but he did not find the idols.⁸⁵

81. Gn 31.17-25.

82. Gn 31.30.

83. Gn 31.32.

84. Gn 31.34.

85. Gn 31.35.

Now while Laban was feeling perplexed and in all probability [249] mourning the loss of his gods, the blessed Jacob not unreasonably complained at how Laban had pursued him for no good reason and had made completely unfounded accusations against him. Then the matter of an agreement between them was proposed, and a pact to unite the two of them in peace was transacted. It says, *Laban answered and said to Jacob, "Your daughters are my daughters, and your sons are my sons, and your animals are my animals, and everything that you see here belongs to me and my daughters. But what can I do to them today and to the children they have borne? So now come, let us make a covenant, me and you, and it shall be a witness between me and you."* Laban also said to him, *"Behold, although no one is with us, understand that God is witness between me and you."* Then Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar. He said to his kinsmen, *"Gather stones."* So they gathered stones and made them into a heap, and they ate there by the heap. Laban then said to Jacob, *"This heap shall testify between me and you this day."* So Laban called it *"Heap of Testimony,"* while Jacob called it *"Witness Heap."*⁸⁶

5. So in these things above we have related the account in a flowing and brief manner, giving our attention to the literal events. It is now necessary to explain their inner meaning.

It does not require many words to demonstrate clearly the fact that the world became mad at Christ, and was incited by rage, because he was made rich with the flocks of believers. For see how, when Jacob departed together with his children, Laban pursued him and called after him. In a way, Christ also departs from the world, together with his brides, that is, the churches. It is as though he removes himself with his entire household, calling out to those who belong to him, *"Rise up, let us go from here,"*⁸⁷ speaking spiritually that is. The manner of departure is not physical, nor does it involve any bodily move from one place to another. It would be quite strange to think or say such. Rather, it is the moving away from the mind set upon worldly things to the desire to do things approved by God that is profitably attained. As the blessed Paul writes, *"Here we have no lasting city, but we are looking for the one that is to come, whose designer*

86. Gn 31:43–44, 50, 45–48.

87. Jn 14:31.

and maker is God.”⁸⁸ Another of the holy apostles writes, “I urge you as strangers and aliens to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul.”⁸⁹ Though we walk upon the earth, our manner of life is heavenly, and we are indeed eager not to live carnally any more but rather in a holy and spiritual way. Paul urges us to do this when he writes, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God.”⁹⁰ When we are not conformed to the world and have come out from worldly error, we shall be imitators of Christ. And knowing this to be so, the Savior said, “If you were of the world, the world would love its own. But since you are not of the world, for this reason the world hates you.”⁹¹ Surely then, as it hates you, so it persecutes you.

God, however, restrains him who is murderous and wild with uncontrolled rage, and he does not so much as permit him to cause distress through harsh words. For God had said to Laban, “*Be careful that you do not say anything evil to Jacob.*” But the world in fact accuses him of having committed robbery, and of destroying its gods. Now it was Rachel who had stolen them. Yet note Laban’s attempt to find them. Laban, it says, searched Leah for his gods, and then the two maidservants also, but [252]⁹² did not find them. Rachel was sitting upon them, giving the excuse that she was suffering from the way of women. So what does this mean? It means that the overthrow of idols was not accomplished by the synagogue of the Jews, neither by the reformation of those born to bondage. Rather, it was accomplished by Rachel, that is, the church, who covered those man-made objects in disgust. Not only this, but with regard to the idols she also fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet: “And you will cast away the idols overlaid with silver, and you will grind to powder the idols overlaid with gold, and you will

88. Heb 13.14; 11.10.

89. 1 Pt 2.11.

90. Rom 12.2.

91. Jn 15.19.

92. The numbering of the Migne columns has omitted 250 and 251, although no text is missing.

throw them away⁹³ like the discharge of an unclean woman, and be rid of them like dung.”⁹⁴

When Laban’s gods were not found, he then made a peace agreement with the divine Jacob. For the world, when it no longer has any falsely called gods, will make friends. It has now come even into a bond of peace with Christ. He is that most esteemed and precious stone, the honored cornerstone, which has become the head of the corner and the foundation of Zion.⁹⁵ For it says, “Jacob set up a pillar,” as a type of Christ. Other stones of the holy apostles are heaped up with it, namely of those who are justified by faith and sanctified in the Spirit, beautifully prefiguring the multitude gathered in Christ. Indeed, concerning the holy apostles, the prophetic word said, “Holy stones are rolled upon the ground.”⁹⁶ For the divine disciples ran about all over the earth, conveying the gospel message to the nations. And the wise Paul writes to those justified by faith, “In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in the Holy Spirit.”⁹⁷

Furthermore, the collection of stones is called “*Heap of Testimony*” by Laban, while the divine Jacob, calling the thing that had been made “*Witness Heap*,” assigns to it a greater and incomparably surpassing meaning, that is, with regard to Christ. For Christ himself is the head of those who believe.

Now that the multitude of angels minister to Christ the Savior of all, who saves his own people, delivering them from the evil in the world; and that it is also evident that they carry out the service prescribed for them, one might readily learn by studying these things further. For when Laban was returning, going peacefully back down to his home, it says, *Jacob looked up and saw an army encamped, and the angels of God met him. When he saw them, Jacob said, “This is the army of God,” and he called the name of the place “Camps.”*⁹⁸ It is written, “The angel of the Lord en-

93. Following the LXX, the text reads “you will crush” (*likmêseis*). The Hebrew reading, however, is “you will scatter.”

94. Is 30.22.

95. Cf. Is 28.16; also Ps 118.22 (117.22 LXX, *eis kephalên gônias*).

96. Zec 9.16 LXX.

97. Eph 2.22.

98. Gn 32.1–2 (32.2–3 LXX).

camp around those who fear him, and he will deliver them."⁹⁹ And again, "He commands his angels concerning you, to guard you in all your ways."¹⁰⁰ Our Lord Jesus Christ does indeed save all those who love him, through whom and with whom be glory to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

More concerning Jacob

1. For those who have chosen to live a most excellent life, the conduct of the saints¹⁰¹ is wonderful indeed, and the splendor of their behavior transcends all words. [253] It is a good example to those who wish to live devoutly, showing clearly and in various ways how one should conduct oneself correctly so as to be like God and to please him.¹⁰² For I myself (though in actual fact it is the word of inspired Scripture) consider it necessary that we ought to examine carefully what the saints of old accomplished through their manner of life and to imitate their faith. And not only this, but that we should also follow in the footsteps of their virtuousness. For it would be absurd to imagine that those with knowledge of the craft of kingship should put themselves forward as instructors in this matter to those who came before them, and that those who had an especially thorough understanding of these things should take pains to emulate them! It would also be absurd to think that we ourselves, to whom progress in virtue is set forth as a goal, should not apply our minds¹⁰³ to the virtuousness of those in ancient times, in order that in a certain manner we may acquire from them the means by which we might be more approved by God, and that we ourselves might cultivate our own sense of how to behave chastely.

Therefore, let the divine Jacob, who is in no way inferior in

99. Ps 34.7 (33.8 LXX).

100. Ps 91.11 (90.11 LXX).

101. Here Cyril is speaking of those "saints" found in Scripture, as is later made clear.

102. Or "so as to please God reasonably."

103. Lit. "the eye of our understanding."

this respect, be set before us as one who was above reproach, I mean one who at that time followed an appropriate way of life with respect to his behavior, having the God of all as his helper and guide, though indeed he sometimes allowed him to suffer difficulties to good purpose. For nobody can attain the glories of virtuousness without pains. Yet after the struggles God bestows upon him a crown of joy and, just like the strongest competitors in the games, makes him rich with a prize.

Do not say to yourself, "Why has not God granted that the saints may rejoice without going through pain?" For this would be to make concessions to those who have not exerted themselves and, worse still, to make it possible that the reward of virtuousness be imparted to them. Instead, the divine benevolence towards them should cause the will of those who have not been tried to produce fruit and to have the wonderful and worthy desire for the gifts of his grace.

Rather, it was first necessary that those of old should be seen as having been approved, and by their deeds to be shown as worthy of the divine blessings, and also that they should be set forth to those coming after them as distinct examples and models of how one should choose to be extremely hardworking and active. So they indicate that for those living a slothful and reprehensible life there will be no reward, whereas the most remarkable blessings of all will follow those who are especially hardworking and who prefer to spend their efforts in life on doing the most pleasing good works.

Thus a certain wise man said, "Child, when you come to serve the Lord, prepare your soul for testing. Set your heart aright and persevere."¹⁰⁴ For perseverance gives birth to a tested character, and a tested character gives birth to hope; and "hope does not disappoint," as it is written.¹⁰⁵

So we shall now come to the subject matter lying before us.

2. After Laban had departed from Mount Gilead, the divine Jacob was eager to get to his homeland and wished to hasten on with his journey. Having barely escaped the onslaught of Laban, and having had only a brief respite, he straightaway encoun-

104. Sir 2.1–2.

105. Rom 5.5.

tered the most fearful difficulties. Upon leaving Mesopotamia and running away to the land of Canaan, it was necessary to pass through Seir, where Esau lived, and so Jacob was greatly afraid. [256] For Esau had not forgotten that he had been aggrieved over the matter of the blessing and the right of the firstborn. Yet how could it not be appropriate to marvel at the way in which he set aside his grief over these matters and treated his brother with love and kindness?

Now it is written: *Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir, the country of Edom, and he commanded them, saying, "This is what you will say to my lord Esau: 'Your servant Jacob says this: I have been staying with Laban and remained there until now. I have oxen, donkeys, sheep, and male and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord Esau so that your servant may find favor in your sight.'"* The messengers returned to Jacob and said, *"We came to your brother Esau. He is coming to meet you, and there are four hundred men with him."* Jacob was exceedingly afraid and distressed. He divided up the people who were with him, and the oxen and sheep, into two companies. Then Jacob said, *"If Esau comes upon one company and attacks it, then the second company will be safe."* Jacob also said, *"O Lord God of my father Abraham, and the God of my father Isaac, who said to me, 'Return quickly to the land of your birth, and I will do good to you,' let me have sufficient of all the righteousness and truth that you have shown your servant. For with this staff of mine I crossed over the Jordan, and now I have become two companies. Deliver me from the hand of my brother Esau, because I am afraid of him, lest he should come and attack me, and the mothers with their children. But you said, 'I will do good to you, and I will make your offspring like the sand of the sea, so that they cannot be counted for number.'"*¹⁰⁶

You see how Jacob coaxes his way into favor with Esau. Not only does he flatter him who had been aggrieved, but he also tries to remove the possibility of uncontrolled anger through speaking appropriate words. Even though better things were allotted him on account of his father's blessing, and he was privileged to possess the right of the firstborn, and even though he had God as his helper, he was submissive in a manner befitting a saint, altogether preferring to prevail by that means.

106. Gn 2.3-12.

“If possible, so far as it depends on you, live at peace with all men.”¹⁰⁷ For at times some people do indeed find a particular statement extremely difficult to oppose and cannot in any way treat it with contempt. As the wise composer of proverbs wrote, “A submissive answer turns away wrath.”¹⁰⁸ And see how the cleverness of the righteous leads to godliness. For Jacob sent messengers to plead for peace, who conveyed to Esau the gentlest of words. He instructed them to say expressly, “*Your servant Jacob says this.*” Furthermore, he himself turned to prayer, and did not cease seeking the help and deliverance it could afford. Jacob affirmed that trial clearly manifested the hope that could be obtained from things now past. He said, “*With this staff of mine I crossed over the Jordan, and now I have become two companies.*” He meant, “Having only the staff brought from my own home, I passed over the Jordan, and through your goodness, O Master, I have become the master of many.”

So from this [257] we too learn that it is necessary to be meek and peaceable, and that we ought always strive to get through situations without being contentious. For “the Lord’s servant,” it says, “must not be quarrelsome, but should be gentle with everyone,” as it is written.¹⁰⁹ I consider it to be most commendable that nothing should keep us from making use of human artifice to good ends. Yet if this situation happens to befall us, it is necessary to request God’s involvement and help from above, not being high-minded, but rather it is written, “As much as you are great, humble yourself that much, and you will find favor with the Lord.”¹¹⁰

If we choose both to think and to act in this way, we will obtain the good things that come from peace, and we will turn the fierceness we face into gentleness. “For the wild animals,” it says, “will be at peace with you.”¹¹¹ This is what Jacob managed to do. For he did not appease his brother by means of artful speech and tender words only, but he also gave him a share of

107. Rom 12.18.

108. Prv 15.1.

109. 2 Tm 2.24.

110. Cf. Jas 4.10; 1 Pt 4.5–6.

111. Jb 5.23.

his possessions as a gift, setting apart for him a rich portion—sheep, oxen, goats, donkeys, camels, and calves. For peace is better than material wealth, and the attainment of brotherly love ought to come before temporal blessings.

And so the divine Jacob was indeed fearful of his brother Esau, as I said, and as he was expecting soon to suffer severely from his brother's anger, he was fainthearted. Yet having overcome his former malice, Esau clung to Jacob and greeted him with tears, and by the laws of nature he was able to put an end to his previous attitude and offer him love. For it is written that *Esau ran to meet him, and, embracing him, he kissed him and fell upon his neck, and they both wept.*¹¹²

Now all these virtuous acts of meekness are the fruit of a submissive and humble mind, and a gift of God's benevolence to those who love him. It levels the steep and smooths the rough, and it satisfies the desires of those who earnestly seek to be devoted to him.

I now think it necessary, however, for us to change the form of our exposition to spiritual contemplation. Come then, let us go back and return to the beginning of the whole matter, for the mystery of Christ will become clear to those who care to learn it.

3. So then, fearing the murderous and savage intent of his brother, and reasonably so, the divine Jacob had set out on his journey to Haran and to Laban, his father Isaac agreeing to his flight. For in this way Jacob thought it necessary to evade the onslaught of the aggrieved Esau.

When he came to Laban, he was wed to the man's two daughters, Leah and Rachel. He was enriched through the birth of children and through herds of animals, and other possessions besides these. But when he came into such prosperity, he undertook to have his own household. So he departed from Haran and from the home of Laban with those things he had acquired, and with his wives and children.

When Laban pursued him and caught up with him, Jacob made a covenant of peace with him. Christ also confirmed the bond of love, for the stone that was set up was a type of Christ.

Then, following this, [260] once he had left Laban and was

¹¹². Gn 33.4.

heading for home, he also made peace with the one who had previously had savage and murderous intentions against him, namely Esau. For they embraced one another, their love for one another in a way combining so as to overcome the former ill-will.

While it is with these matters that the whole of the literal account concludes, we are nevertheless mindful that we assign to Jacob the role¹¹³ of representing Christ himself, as well as of those who are justified by faith. We also say that Esau prefigures in himself the people of the law and circumcision. Further, it is especially noteworthy that God the Master of all, while the labor pains were still upon her who was having twin boys, said to Rebekah, “Two nations and two peoples will be separated from your womb. One people will have preeminence over the other, and the elder will serve the younger.”¹¹⁴ This, too, was fulfilled in Christ. For although first in order of time came the people of Israel, who were for this reason named the firstborn, they were in fact second in rank and have been placed behind those who have become a people through faith in Christ. It is these who have inherited the glory of the Firstborn, even though he is Only-Begotten, into whose likeness they have also been formed, having received the regeneration through the Spirit that leads to incorruption and holiness.

So, as he was inflamed with jealousy, Esau, representing Israel, persecuted Jacob, by whom we mean Christ. And as I said, in these matters we find that no distinction is made in the account, which always follows what is appropriate—at one time referring to Jacob as Christ, and at another to the new people of God through faith.

Christ, then, having been persecuted, after a certain fashion departed into the land of the Gentiles, though not willingly. He then cried out these words: “I have forsaken my house, I have abandoned my inheritance; I have given the one beloved of my soul into the hands of her enemies. My inheritance has become to me like a lion in a thicket. She has roared out against me;

113. See n. 40 above.

114. Gn 25:23.

therefore I have hated her."¹¹⁵ In his kindness and love, however, Christ manifested himself to the women in the garden after his resurrection from the dead, and said, "Go, tell my brothers that they should go to Galilee, and they will see me there."¹¹⁶ He came into Galilee just as the divine Jacob came into Haran and tended the sheep belonging to Laban, that is, to the world, which serves the creature and is deceived, just like Laban.

While Christ was there among the Gentiles, like a bridegroom he spiritually took to wife a pure virgin, namely the Gentile church, represented by Rachel. He also brought in with her the one who had already been yoked to him through the law, that is, the synagogue of the Jews, of which Leah was a type. For "the remnant of Israel has been saved," in accordance with what the prophet said,¹¹⁷ even though perhaps the whole mass of them did not value the grace that comes through faith in Christ.

Christ, therefore, is shown to be the bridegroom for the Gentiles. And since by grace he brought to the new birth a great many appointed for adoption as sons in the Spirit, and gathered together a truly numerous flock of spiritual sheep, he was persecuted by the world. For certain of those in the world, being devoted to receiving the highest honors and [261] having supreme power on earth, were hostile to the glory of Christ. Yet his divine grace put them to shame, and the world made a peace agreement with Christ, just as Laban did with Jacob.

Moreover, in later times our Lord Jesus Christ will be reconciled with Israel, his persecutor of old, just as Jacob embraced Esau after his return from Haran. That Israel itself after some time will be received into the love of Christ through faith, we who submit to the words of the inspired Scripture may not in the least doubt. There is a passage where the Master of all says through one of the holy prophets, "For the people of Israel will abide many days without a king or a ruler, without sacrifice or an altar, without a priesthood or revelations."¹¹⁸ And after these

115. Jer 12.7-8.

116. Mt 28.10.

117. Cf. Is 10.22.

118. Or "manifestations."

things the people of Israel will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king, and they shall hope in the Lord and in his goodness in the latter days.”¹¹⁹

While, however, Christ, the Savior of us all, is still gathering out of the nations those who believe, how is Israel desolated! They have no law for appointing their rulers, nor can they offer at the divine altar the sacrifices prescribed by the law. So they wait for Christ to return from calling the Gentiles, that he may also receive Israel through faith and unite them to the others by the law of his love. Observe how Jacob, who rejoiced over the birth of his children and over his numerous herds of animals, returned from Haran and received Esau back into his affection. In time, then, after the calling of the Gentiles, Israel will be converted and will marvel at these riches in Christ.

This very thing, for those who care to examine it, is also readily to be found in the literal events that happened. Jacob sent gifts to Esau, and so, by honoring him with these things, changed his attitude to one of love. He also sent ahead messengers to speak to him words of peace. Christ also plainly revealed at times that those things that establish friendship with Israel will eventually come to pass. For in a certain passage he said to the Jews through the mouth of the prophet, “And behold, I will send to you Elijah the Tishbite before the great and glorious day of the Lord comes. He will restore the heart of the father to the son, and the heart of a man to his neighbor, lest I come and severely afflict the land.”¹²⁰ That one will come and, as would be reasonable,¹²¹ he will turn back unruly Israel and bring them out from the state of wrath in which they have been for so long. He will restore them to peace and friendship with Christ, showing in effect the precious gifts he has to offer, that is, the hope given to those who believe. For the matters relating to the promise will not further be delayed for those who then believe, but the free gift will be near, and grace will be close at hand. Indeed, once the “son of sin” has been overthrown,¹²²

119. Hos 3.4–5.

120. Mal 4.5–6 (3.22–23 LXX).

121. Or “in all probability.”

122. Here Cyril makes possible allusion to 2 Thes 2.3, where there are the

Christ the Savior of us all will come down from heaven with the holy angels. Through him and with him be glory to the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen. [264]

More concerning Jacob

1. Now through sin human nature fell into a state of death. And since he was totally separated from him that knew how to save, the one fashioned in the divine image was all but a slave, weighed down with the burden of servitude. For he did not willingly submit¹²³ to the tyranny of Satan, who through his exceedingly great arrogance (for that evil spirit was haughty) acted defiantly, so to speak, against all those upon the earth, and said, "With my hand I will seize the whole world like a bird's nest, and I will take them like eggs that have been abandoned; and there is none who will escape me or oppose me."¹²⁴ He has exercised his rule arrogantly, as I said, and is even named "the god of this world."¹²⁵ For the world worshiped him and served the creature rather than the Creator.¹²⁶

Since, however, in such a situation God had mercy upon those brought into this state of wretchedness, he promised to send us his Son from heaven to restore human nature to how it was in the beginning. Those in Christ are a new creation, as the Scriptures say.¹²⁷ And the blessed prophets were the bearers of good tidings for us, "who prophesied of the grace that would come to us, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating when he bore witness in advance to those things Christ was destined to suffer and to the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that it was not themselves they were serving but us."¹²⁸ For this is what the disciple of the Savior wrote.

variant readings "man of sin" and "man of lawlessness," and to Jn 17.12, "the son of perdition."

123. Lit. "place his neck under."

124. Is 10.14.

125. 2 Cor 4.4.

126. Cf. Rom 1.25.

127. Cf. 2 Cor 5.17.

128. 1 Pt 1.10-12.

These prophets also had a good deal to say about our Savior becoming man, and the fact that he would eventually come as a redeemer. It would do no harm to say a few words about this for the better instruction of the readers. This matter suitably serves to establish a charge against the people of the Jews, as can be seen from the events themselves. For even though they could discern the advent of the Savior out of the prophetic oracles, as well as understand it, one might suppose, from the shadows present in the law, those wretches perversely set themselves against the divine revelations and against Christ himself. This is in fact what the wise Paul said to us: "A hardening has come upon part of Israel,"¹²⁹ so that "seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not hear, nor understand."¹³⁰ The Savior himself also said the same thing.¹³¹

So too, the divine Isaiah presented to us Emmanuel in his own writings, when he plainly said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me; he has sent me to preach good news to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim release to captives, and recovery of sight to the blind; to declare an acceptable year of the Lord, and a day of recompense."¹³² For these were the marvelous deeds he would perform at his coming.

In another place Hosea also said concerning him, "The people of Judah and the people of Israel will be gathered together, and they will appoint for themselves one ruler; and they will come up out of the land,"¹³³ for great will be the day of Jezreel."¹³⁴ For most teachers among the Jews at that time [265] persuaded them to honor the God of all with their lips only, teaching the people in their charge the commandments of men as their doctrine.¹³⁵ But now Christ has been appointed as the one ruler over everybody and everything; and we have come up

129. Rom 11.25.

130. Is 6.9.

131. Mt 13.13; Lk 8.10.

132. Is 61.1–2; var. omit "and a day of recompense."

133. Or "earth."

134. Hos 1.11 (2.2 LXX).

135. Cf. Is 29.13.

out of the land.¹³⁶ that is, we have been taught to set our minds upon the things above.¹³⁷ For the day of Jezreel, which means "sowing the seed of God," will truly be great, that seed which is sown being the Son.¹³⁸

The divine David also spoke to us of this day when he said, "This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it."¹³⁹ The most-wise Paul further adds, "Behold, now is the acceptable day; behold, now is the day of salvation,"¹⁴⁰ evidently meaning that day on which we were saved, since it is to this very thing that Christ calls us. For as the wise disciple said, "There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."¹⁴¹

Hear, too, what Jeremiah plainly says, "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous branch,¹⁴² and a king will reign and understand; he will execute judgment and righteousness upon the earth. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely. And this is his name, which the Lord will call him among the prophets—Josedek."¹⁴³ For Christ the righteous king has taken up his reign over us; he has executed judgment and righteousness, having delivered those going astray in their sins, and having condemned that tyrannical enemy,¹⁴⁴ Satan. And his name is Josedeek, that is, "the righteousness of God." For we have been justified¹⁴⁵ in him, not through works of righteousness that we ourselves have done, but through his great mercy.¹⁴⁶

Accordingly, God the Father also stated, "My righteousness draws near speedily," and "My mercy will be revealed."¹⁴⁷ For

136. Or "earth."

137. Cf. Col 3.2; var. add "having the mind that rejects earthly things, and we have been ordained to a better death."

138. By this Cyril probably means the Incarnation.

139. Ps 118.24 (117.24 LXX).

140. 2 Cor 6.2.

141. Acts 4.12.

142. Lit. "a righteous dawn [*anatolē*]." Cf. Zec 6.12 LXX.

143. Jer 23.5-6.

144. Var. "destroyer."

145. That is, "made righteous, declared righteous."

146. Cf. Ti 3.5.

147. Is 51.5; 56.1.

Christ has become the mercy and righteousness that comes to us from God the Father. It is by this very name Christ, “the anointed,” that he is called by the glorious band of the saints. For indeed the blessed Samuel, notable among the prophets, declared to the people of Israel, saying, “And behold, I have walked before you from my youth until today. Here I am; testify against me before the Lord and before his anointed.”¹⁴⁸ And again, “The Lord is witness among you, and his anointed is witness this day, that you found nothing in my hand.”¹⁴⁹

Furthermore, the blessed David most clearly accuses the Jews of rebellion, of unrestrained insolence against Christ, of futile scheming and puerile arguments, when he says, “Why did the nations rage, and the peoples plot vain things? The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers gathered together, against the Lord and against his anointed.”¹⁵⁰ Truly the foolish plots of the Jews against Christ were in vain. For he who is the Life did not die, he who said to the spirits below, “Come forth,” and to those in darkness, “Show yourselves,” nor was he overpowered by the gates of Hades.

Again, [268] the prophet Jeremiah lamented over Jerusalem, as being unholy, profane, ill-disposed, and the murderer of the Lord. For he said, “The breath of our nostrils, the anointed Lord,¹⁵¹ was caught in their destructive snares, of whom we said, ‘In his shadow we will live among the nations.’”¹⁵² For when they ought to have taken hold of the grace that comes through faith as the way of salvation, they contended against God and were condemned.

Therefore, the Author of all things, the Only-Begotten Word of God, condescending to empty himself, was anointed by the Father and became one of us. And the goal of this emptying was to save those upon the earth. The prophet Zephaniah, for example, proclaimed the good news, saying, “Rejoice greatly, O

148. 1 Sm 12.2–3. “Anointed” in the LXX, here cited by Cyril is, of course, the term *christos*.

149. 1 Sm 12.5.

150. Ps 2.1–2.

151. *christos kurios*. The Hebrew text, as well as some copies of the LXX, in fact state “the Anointed of the Lord.”

152. Lam 4.20.

daughter of Zion, shout out, O daughter of Jerusalem, rejoice and be glad with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord has taken away your iniquities, he has redeemed you from the hand of your enemies. The Lord will reign over Israel in your midst, and you will see disaster no more.”¹⁵³

The disobedient and hard-hearted, however, and those who were insolent beyond measure, abused him most shamefully, acting rashly and scheming most recklessly. And so they brought forth the just deserts of their transgressions. For the evil perish in an evil way. Yet this does not apply to all of them. For the remnant was shown mercy and saved, as the prophet says.¹⁵⁴

2. Now the divine Jacob was taught that these things would eventually happen this way, since God wonderfully portrayed the matter to him. And how this was so, I will state, making necessary reference to those things found in the sacred Scriptures.

The account reads as follows: *Rising up that night, he took his two wives, his two maidservants, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He took them and sent them across the river, and he also sent over all his possessions. Then Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the broad part of his thigh, and this part of Jacob's thigh became numb¹⁵⁵ as he wrestled with him. And the man said, "Let me go, for the day has dawned." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." The man asked him, "What is your name?" And he answered, "Jacob." Then he said to him, "No longer will your name be called Jacob, but your name will be Israel, because you have prevailed with God and you are mighty with men." Jacob asked him and said, "Tell me your name." The man said, "Why is it that you ask me my name?" He then blessed him there. Jacob called the name of that place "Appearance of God,"¹⁵⁶ for he said, "I have seen God face-to-face, and my life has been spared." The sun rose upon him when the appearance of God passed on, and Jacob limped upon his thigh.¹⁵⁷*

153. Zep 3.14-15.

154. See n. 117.

155. Or "stiff."

156. Or "Form [*eidōs*] of God." The Hebrew name, Peniel, literally means "face of God."

157. Gn 32.23-31.

So the divine Jacob sent all his possessions over the River Jab-bok, while he himself stayed behind alone. How can it not be worthwhile looking into what this means? Come then, and let us investigate the reason for it all. For this account will directly lead us on to spiritual concerns.

3. Esau lived in Edom and Seir, and he had dominion over the land and over those regions which were not under the control of Jacob. But when the latter left Mesopotamia [269] and the home of Laban, and was eager to return to the land of his father, it was absolutely necessary for him to make his journey through Edom. With great diplomacy he sought to greet his brother in a peaceful manner, and told messengers to go ahead bearing wonderful gifts, for he himself would come on more cautiously. Jacob also instructed the messengers to inform him in advance, so that he would know if by the gifts and through their message he had managed to placate Esau's former raging and murderous hostility.

When those sent ahead returned and said, "*We came to your brother Esau, and behold, he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him,*" the divine Jacob was very fearful. For he had no way of knowing for sure whether he would meet with one who was friendly and peaceable, or with one who would show nothing but the usual fearsome brazenness and who would choose to act maliciously.

Now Jacob sent all that belonged to him across the river, while he stayed behind alone. He did this, I suppose, having thoroughly considered the situation. Esau might perhaps appear propitious and gentle, causing no problem nor saying anything harsh, in which case his wives and children would be sent back again. On the other hand, Esau might come still feeling bitter and contentious, wanting nothing more than to commit murder, in which case he would spare the children, and show mercy at the tears of the women. He would seize Jacob only and execute his wrath on him, the death of the one who grieved him being enough to satisfy him. Yet what in fact happened to Jacob, through the power of God, far exceeded his hopes, for, as we previously said, they embraced one another.

So then, from these things that occurred, the import¹⁵⁸ of the mystery is taught. How and in what manner, I will now tell. It is indeed the case that *he sent across the river all that belonged to him*, and that *when he stayed behind alone, a man wrestled with him until daybreak*. We say that the one wrestling with him was a holy angel, a type of Christ who, on account of his humanity, was just like us. So because Jacob himself did not also cross over the river with the others, the river being the Jabbok, which means "wrestling," he and the other man engaged in what seems to be a fight.

What might the interpretation of this matter be? That is, what is its inner meaning? Now Christ does not wrestle with those who cross over the Jordan, of which the Jabbok was a type, nor does he count among his opponents or adversaries those who honor his mysteries. Rather, he preserves those who have overcome the world as in a spiritual fight, so to speak; he crowns them and decorates them with heavenly honors.

The name of the river was "wrestling," for "the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent seize it by force."¹⁵⁹ Also, "Narrow is the gate, and difficult is the way leading to life, and there are few that find it."¹⁶⁰

The things that happened here foreshadow the fact that those descended from Jacob at a later time would not cross over the Jordan, that is, receive the grace that comes through holy baptism, and that they would impiously dishonor Emmanuel and have him henceforth as their adversary. For those who do not honor him by having faith will be reckoned as though they are totally opposed to him. This the Savior himself affirms when he says, "The one who is not with me is against me."¹⁶¹ As those who are with him are those who have come to faith, that the [272] converse is also true how could one doubt?

Now it says, *The man wrestled with Jacob until daybreak, and saw that he was not able to overpower him*. Note how the fight happened during the night. In falling and being overpowered, Jacob re-

158. Lit. "power," "force."

159. Cf. Mt 11.12.

160. Mt 7.14.

161. Mt 12.30.

ceived a reproof, because he was seeking what was unattainable, choosing to fight against God, and to get the better of him who is stronger than all. It is this, I believe, that the divine David also spoke of in the Psalms concerning the people of Israel, saying that terrible things would be visited upon their heads, not to mention that against Christ “they devised a plot in which they would never be able to succeed.”¹⁶²

Israel, then, fought against Christ, since they were in darkness, that is, they did not have the divine mind to enlighten them, nor, speaking spiritually, did they have the dawning day or the morning star that rises in the hearts of believers.¹⁶³ They have in fact continued in their unbelieving state, as the prophet says, “While they were waiting for light, darkness came upon them; while they were waiting for brightness, they walked in gloom.”¹⁶⁴

Contrariwise, the divine Paul, writing to those justified by faith, who have been richly blessed through the Spirit, says, “We are not of the night, nor of the darkness, but we are sons of light and of the day.”¹⁶⁵ That these are in a better state than the ignorance of the Jews and have escaped the darkness that manifestly covers them,¹⁶⁶ Paul makes evident when he further says, “The night is far gone, and the day is near. So let us lay aside the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk decently, as in the day.”¹⁶⁷

So then, those who believe are of the day, while those who disbelieve, since they are of the night and the darkness, fight against Christ. This is what the people descended from Jacob did. Yet they were weak and defeated, unable to stand. For it says that *the man wrestling with Jacob touched the broad part of his thigh, and this part of Jacob's thigh became numb as he wrestled with him*. What we should understand, then, from this, we will now declare. In inspired Scripture the thigh mostly stands for those

162. Ps 21.11 (20.11 LXX).

163. Cf. 2 Pt 1.19.

164. Is 59.9.

165. 1 Thes 5.5.

166. That is, the Jews.

167. Rom 13.12.

parts of the body necessary to procreate children, and also for the offspring themselves, which are procreated from these. This is because the reproductive organs of all creatures are located in the area of the thighs. And so the blessed Abraham, when he sent his servant to Mesopotamia to take a wife for Isaac, ordered him to swear an oath, and said to him, "Put your hand under my thigh,"¹⁶⁸ which means, "Swear by God, and by those who shall come forth from me, the offspring of your master." The thigh, then, signifies those who come forth from the loins.

Now Jacob's thigh became numb, indicating that those coming from his loins, namely the people of Israel, would become lame. The Savior himself thus says through the mouth of David, "Sons of strangers dealt falsely with me; sons of strangers grew weary and stumbled lamely off their paths."¹⁶⁹ And that Israel has continued to be spiritually lame the wise Paul also understood, for he writes, "Therefore, strengthen your feeble hands and your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that [273] what is lame may not stumble,¹⁷⁰ but rather be healed."¹⁷¹ The healing of such lameness may not happen in any other way except through faith and love toward Christ. According to the words of the blessed Paul, those who have not come to faith continue in their lameness and hurtful stumbling. So then, the injury that happened to Jacob's thigh while he was wrestling was a figure of the spiritual lameness of Israel.

That we are not saying anything false when we affirm that Christ opposes and, in a certain manner, wrestles against those who are of the night, who have a darkened mind, and inflicts them with spiritual lameness, one might readily learn from what follows. For the man wrestling with Jacob said to him, "*Let me go, for the day has dawned.*" See how he does not persist in wrestling once the day has dawned. For there is no fight for those who have come into the light. It would be fitting for those who have passed into such brightness to say, "O God, my God, I come to you at dawn."¹⁷² Further to this, "In the morning you shall hear

168. Gn 24.2.

169. Ps 18.44-45 (17.45-46 LXX).

170. Or "be dislocated."

171. Heb 12.12-13.

172. Ps 63.1 (62.2 LXX).

my voice, in the morning I shall stand before you, and you shall look upon me.”¹⁷³ When the light of righteousness, which is Christ, arises in our minds and brings spiritual radiance into our hearts, then, through his manifold goodness, we shall stand before him in brilliant splendor, and we will show ourselves worthy to be looked upon from above. For it says, “The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous.”¹⁷⁴ So once the dawn has come, it brings an end to the fight.

Observe how cleverly and skillfully he teaches Jacob when he wants to leave, and how he is greatly desirous of imparting to him those things necessary for his salvation. For even though the one who was defeated might not wish to release him, he who was utterly victorious and able to withdraw placed the authority in the other’s hands, as it were, for what he himself wanted to do, and, perhaps because he was held tightly, he said, “*Let me go.*”

We find that this is similar to what was most wisely and cleverly spoken by God to Moses. For God intended to exact the punishment due to senseless Israel when they committed idolatry in the wilderness (for they had made a calf). Yet he allowed the blessed Moses to prevent his wrath, if he so wished, and to make entreaty on behalf of those who had sinned. “I have spoken to you,” the Lord said, “once and again, saying, ‘I have seen this people, and behold, they are a stiff-necked people. Leave me alone that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven; and I will make you into a great nation.’”¹⁷⁵ But when Moses perceived the divine disposition to show mercy, he sought to prevent the punishment, and said, “If you will indeed forgive their sin, then forgive it; but if not, blot me out also from the book which you have written.”¹⁷⁶

So in a manner much like this, the words “*Let me go*” were spoken to Jacob by the one who was wrestling with him. Quickly learning who it was with whom he was wrestling, and coming to an understanding of the whole affair, Jacob strived exceedingly,

173. Ps 5.3 (5.4 LXX).

174. Ps 34.15 (33.16 LXX).

175. Dt 9.13–14.

176. Ex 32.32.

and said, *"I will not let you go, unless you bless me."* And he was blessed, [276] and the way in which the blessing was given was that his first name was changed to another. For he was told, *"No longer will your name be called Jacob, but your name will be Israel."* Jacob means "one who overcomes," that is, one who employs great effort and vigilance to enable him to succeed in what must be done. The name Israel, on the other hand, means "one who sees God."¹⁷⁷

We shall now go back a little way in the narrative and offer an explanation of these matters.

4. So Jacob, having wrestled and been defeated, and having suffered the benumbing of his thigh in the darkness, as it was getting light and the morning was beginning to dawn, still held on, though not in an aggressive way, to the one he had wrestled. He insisted that he give him a blessing, and indeed he was blessed, as his name was changed to Israel. For disobedient and stubborn Israel opposed Emmanuel, yet they did so in ignorance and darkness, that is, on account of their lack of understanding, since they were hardened. They were almost completely unaware that the divine light had risen upon them, spiritually speaking.

Israel was blessed by Christ, though not fully, but only through a certain portion of them who believed. "There is a remnant of Israel, chosen by grace," as it is written,¹⁷⁸ and those of the Jews who came to believe were not a few in number. Even before these, there were the divine disciples, who represented Jacob. Though under the law they were weak, they acted as such who overcome, exerting themselves vigorously, because they sought especially to have an encounter with God. For they were blameless with respect to the righteousness which is according to the law.¹⁷⁹

After this, Israel was further blessed, that is, they were transformed in their minds so as to see God. Now, to know Christ,

177. Cyril here is referring to the meaning present in the place name "Penei" (Gn 32.30), that is, "face of God." The name Israel itself most probably means "one who strives with God."

178. Rom 11.5.

179. Cf. Phil 3.6.

who he is, how he became one of us, and what his manner of life was like subsequent to his Incarnation,¹⁸⁰ this, I say, is to receive into one's mind the light of the true divine vision. That the knowledge of God is greater, more profitable, and incomparably better than the way of life under the law, he himself affirms, saying through one of the prophets, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings."¹⁸¹

Paul too, though he was outstanding and blameless with respect to righteousness according to the law, "counted all things as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ."¹⁸² That genuine knowledge of Christ is superior to the glory that comes from performing works, Paul again makes clear when he writes to Timothy, telling him to "train himself in godliness, for bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable in every way, since it holds promises for the present life and for the life to come."¹⁸³ As the Savior himself said to the Father in heaven, "This is eternal life: that they might know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."¹⁸⁴

So then, though someone may perhaps be a Jacob, that is, he may be able to overcome, and by his strength and cleverness be able to escape everything that induces weakness and leads to sin, it is through Christ that he will succeed and come to an understanding that befits the saints. So he will be called Israel—"one who sees God." Then, being mighty with God, he will also be mighty with men.

Accordingly, to know God and to appropriate knowledge of him does not come from the feeble effort of the frail, though [277] he might see dimly as in a mirror.¹⁸⁵ But it is achieved by the one who is brought to such a state of weakness, who reckons carnal and worldly things of no account, and who with a vigorous and active mind is able to strive for what is pleasing to God. This is the one who will be mighty among men, and mighty with God.

180. Lit. "after the economy of flesh."

181. Hos 6.6.

182. Phil 3.8.

183. Cf. 1 Tm 4.7–8.

184. Jn 17.3.

185. Cf. 1 Cor 13.12.

So then, the divine Jacob was indeed blessed, and he further said, "*Tell me your name.*" The other replied, "*Why is it that you ask me my name?*" God did not tell him his name, because revealing it in such a manner would have been the natural way¹⁸⁶ to do it. For the way in which a man has a name is not at all how it is with God. He, however, is named in manifold ways from the things that he has brought into being. For he is Light, Life, Power, and Truth. He is the Only-Begotten, Radiance, and the Image of the One who begot him. He is Mercy, Wisdom, Righteousness, and Redemption. Perceiving him to be God, to whom no name may properly be applied, the blessed Jacob called the name of that place "Appearance of God."¹⁸⁷ For he said, "*I have seen God face-to-face, and my life has been spared.*" Note, then, how Jacob became Israel, namely "one who sees God." When the man wrestled with him, Jacob said that he saw God face-to-face, and yet his life was preserved.¹⁸⁸ For knowledge concerning Christ is something that leads to preservation.¹⁸⁹

The Word, therefore, is God in human flesh, for the patriarch Jacob said that he had seen God face-to-face. *When the sun rose*, it says, *the appearance of God passed on, and Jacob limped upon his thigh*. Similarly, as I have already stated, when the light shone upon the Jews, the fight came to an end. Also, the appearance of God moved on, that is to say, Christ ascended into heaven. Yet lame Israel was not delivered. For not all were saved. Israel continues to suffer, so to speak, through those who disbelieve, with the result that it is not at all able to walk correctly. So then, since Israel had seen the appearance of God, it was called by a new name—"the one who overcomes" was altered to "the one who sees God spiritually."

Now what happened after this? *Jacob journeyed on*, it says, *to Tabernacles, and he made a home for himself and tabernacles for his livestock. For this reason he called the name of that place "Tabernacles."*¹⁹⁰ You see here how Jacob lived in tabernacles. This was a

186. Lit. "according to nature" (*kata phusin*).

187. See n. 177 above.

188. Or "saved."

189. Or "salvation."

190. Gn 33.17; the Hebrew term, rendered as "Succoth" in English versions, means "tabernacles," "tents," "shelters."

clear sign of the pursuit of something better, which was in the mind of Israel. For having made these tabernacles, he lived in them.

For the mind that now sees and has been worthy of a divine vision, that has been nurtured and reared by various endowments to progress towards a state of perfection, is a most valuable gift¹⁹¹ from God. It no more reckons the things of this world to be of any account, but rather deems life in the body to be a temporary residence. For this mind is divine¹⁹² in character and is a genuine indication of a distinguished and transformed way of life. Give heed to the important words of the blessed David in the Psalms: "Spare me, because I am a stranger in the land and a sojourner, as all my fathers were."¹⁹³ Paul, too, writes to those who have come to the stature of the fullness of Christ and who have reached mature manhood [280], saying, "Here we have no lasting city, but we are looking for the one that is to come, whose designer and maker is God."¹⁹⁴ So the fact that the divine Jacob, namely Israel, chose to live in tabernacles is symbolic, the significance of which is not, one may suppose, at all obscure for those rightly disposed. For those whose eyes are upon God, and whose minds have been enlightened, the things of the present world are reckoned to be like a temporary residence.

*Then Jacob came to Salem, a city of Shechem, which was in the land of Canaan.*¹⁹⁵ Here once again that righteous man was tried, suffering wrong in the affair involving Dinah his daughter. This girl, though still quite young and a virgin, went out from her father's tent to take a look at the local girls.¹⁹⁶ It is in fact the case that the female of the species is always desirous of friendship with those of the same age. So the young woman went off.

Shechem the son of Hamor shamefully seized Dinah and, being carried away on a wave of unrestrained lust, he raped her. He then thought to make the girl his wife. At this, Sime-

191. Lit. "fruit."

192. Or "holy."

193. Ps 39.12–13 (38.13–14 LXX).

194. Heb 13.14; 11.10.

195. Gn 33.18. Cyril follows the LXX in interpreting the Hebrew term "safely" (*sālēm*) as a place name (Salem).

196. Cf. Gn 34.1.

on and Levi, the young woman's brothers, were provoked to wrath, and, not being able to tolerate the outrage, they planned to carry out godless acts against the offenders. They persuaded the men of Shechem to join with them in their ancestral law of circumcision. But then they killed them all without any mercy or compassion. The divine Jacob, however, was extremely indignant at this, and rebuked his sons, saying, "*You have made me hateful, so that I am evil to the inhabitants of the land.*"¹⁹⁷ Indeed, those murderers did not restrain their wrath and, though they had been brought up by a righteous father, they did not consider anything of what they did to be the slightest bit depraved. For they wrought destruction, and killed those who trusted them and intended to become one with them.

So then, the profit we can get from this (for the inspired Scripture never says anything without purpose), we shall explain as we are able.

5. Now, we have been born by means of a spiritual generation, and through Christ we have been granted a place among the children of God. Perhaps a soul, once reborn through holy baptism and ordained a daughter of God,¹⁹⁸ may become defiled by those wont to do things of such a kind, or may be led away by carnal desires, or may go astray in her thinking with regard to God (for the contemptible opinions of the profane heretics are truly of such a nature). Then those who in respect of their faith are brothers to the injured party, if they belong to the priestly order—as in fact Levi did, and as may perhaps be supposed also of Simeon, being among the ranks of the obedient (for Simeon means "obedience")—become indignant when one of their household of faith is wronged. They should not, however, proceed to demand blood, nor should they exact a heavy penalty from those who have wrought harm. This would be to pay no heed to Christ, who says to them, "*You have made me hateful, so that I am evil to the inhabitants of the land.*" It must also be remembered that the Savior himself once rebuked the di-

197. Gn 34.30.

198. Since the Greek noun for "soul" (*psuchê*) is feminine, Cyril here speaks of it as God's "daughter," thus making an apt parallel with Jacob's daughter Dinah.

vine Peter when he drew his sword, saying, "Put your sword back in its sheath. For all [281] those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword."¹⁹⁹ Indeed, it is not fitting for us, who have been chosen to contend earnestly for piety toward God, to arm ourselves with swords against our enemies. Rather, we should be longsuffering. And though some people may wish to persecute us, when reviled we bless,²⁰⁰ when suffering we do not grumble;²⁰¹ instead we give ourselves over to him who judges justly.

Those wishing to avoid destruction, however, ought to be careful not to go off somewhere out of their father's tent, that is, the house of God, nor to attend to the gatherings of foreigners or of those with strange ideas. For when Dinah went out from her father's tent, she was brought into the house of Shechem. Yet she would never have been abused if she had stayed²⁰² in the dwellings of her father and resided among the tents of the saints. That such a thing is good and not without profit, the blessed David declares in the Psalms, "One thing I have asked from the Lord, this I will seek, that I should dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, and that I should behold the delightfulness of the Lord and survey his holy temple. For he hid me in his tent on the day of my troubles, he sheltered me in the secret place of his tabernacle."²⁰³

So then, as Jacob was altogether fearful and fainthearted, God commanded him to move away. The account reads as follows: *God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel, and live there. Make an altar there to the God who appeared to you when you were fleeing from Esau your brother." So Jacob said to those of his household and to all those with him, "Remove the foreign gods from your midst, and purify yourselves and change your clothes."*²⁰⁴ *Then arise, let us go up to Bethel, and let us make there an altar to God, who heard me on the day of my distress and who has been with me and preserved me wherever I have gone."* So they gave Jacob the foreign gods which they had and the

199. Mt 26.52.

200. Cf. 1 Cor 4.12.

201. Var. "threaten."

202. Var. "chosen to stay."

203. Ps 27.4–5 (26.4–5 LXX).

204. Var. omit "and purify yourselves and change your clothes."

*rings that were in their ears. Then Jacob buried them under the terebinth tree that was at Shechem, and thus he destroyed them to this day.*²⁰⁵

The God of all summoned that righteous man from Shechem to Bethel, and he was not disobedient. Then while he was in Luz,²⁰⁶ Jacob was deemed worthy of beholding a divine vision, and the promise that he would be the father of many nations was confirmed. When he went up to Bethel, it says, *Jacob set up there a pillar in the place where God had spoken with him, a pillar of stone, and he offered a drink offering on it and poured oil upon it. And Jacob called the name of the place where God had spoken to him Bethel.*²⁰⁷

Many such things happened which give a clear portrayal of Jacob's return to the land of Israel, and of his choosing to move to an incomparably better situation. Jacob did indeed live in tabernacles and by this means he in effect demonstrates the people of the saints to be sojourners in the world. Then, having suffered those things that happened to his daughter, and being exceedingly grieved at the base deeds shamefully enacted by Simeon and Levi in their fury, he severely rebuked them [284], showing us through his actions the patience and longsuffering under trials that befits the saints.

When called by God, Jacob went up to Bethel, that is, to the house of God (for that is what "Bethel" means). He performed sacrifices to God and showed himself to be learned in the mysteries. He plainly sets out for those coming after him the proper manner of coming to the house of God, for he commands them to cast off the foreign gods like garbage and filth, and to change their clothes. This practice is also fitting for us when we are called into the presence of God or brought into his divine temple, especially at the time of holy baptism. For it is necessary, by way of casting the foreign gods from our midst and abandoning such falsehood, that we should say, "I renounce you, Satan, with all your pomp and all your worship." Furthermore, we must all change our clothes by stripping off the old man that is corrupt through deceitful lusts, and putting on the new that is being re-

205. Gn 35.1-4.

206. According to the Hebrew text of Gn 35.6, Luz was another name for Bethel (cf. Gn 28.19).

207. Gn 35.14-15.

newed according to the image of its Creator.²⁰⁸ Also the women with Jacob got rid of the ornaments in their ears. So women who enter the house of God without any carnal adornment and who leave their hair loose avoid being accused, one may suppose, of beautifying their heads. This I believe is the significance of the women removing the ornaments in their ears.

Whenever, therefore, we go up to Bethel, that is, to the house of God, we shall there acknowledge the stone, the elect stone that has become the head of the corner, which is Christ. We shall see the one anointed by the Father with all the gladness and joy under heaven. For the Son, as I said, has been anointed by God the Father with “the gladness of us all, with universal²⁰⁹ joy,” as the psalmist says.²¹⁰ So you see that this also is prefigured in the things just stated to us about Jacob setting up the stone and sprinkling it with oil and wine. What was done was indeed a type of the mystery regarding Christ, through whom and with whom be glory to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

208. Cf. Eph 4.22; Col 3.10.

209. Lit. “worldwide.”

210. Cf. Ps 45.7 (44.8 LXX).

BOOK SIX: GENESIS 36–48

Concerning Joseph

WITHOUT ANY DOUBT the mystery of godliness, which is Christ, is great,¹ and what is said about him is exceedingly deep, as is the purpose for which he took on flesh. Yet with some effort its meaning becomes apparent, not so much to those who merely have the desire, but to those who are right-minded, [285] since they are illuminated by divine grace, are wise and perceptive, and are knowledgeable in the writings of the law and the prophets. Take the divine Peter, for instance, who was chief among the disciples, being placed over the others; he gave a correct confession of faith, and was told by Christ, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father, who is in heaven.”² So God the Father instructs us in the mystery concerning the Son, and also delivers us by bringing us to him as our Savior and Redeemer, for Christ said, “No one comes to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.”³

Accordingly, if we understand, let us say, what is said about him throughout all the holy Scripture, and if we acquire an unerring comprehension of the faith, this will prevent us from having a heart that is, as it were, stirred up by confounded double-mindedness, or that raves drunkenly, or that falls afoul of agitations arising from ignorance. Let us further hear what God says through the mouth of the prophet: “They have loved to wander, and have not held back; therefore, God has not been pleased with them.”⁴

1. Cf. 1 Tm 3.16.

2. Mt 16.17.

3. Jn 6.44.

4. Jer 14.10.

For this reason, through numerous images⁵ God informs us of the truth, and has helpfully laid down the things that happened at that former time as a foundation for faith in Christ, setting forth distinct representations, as it were, that give knowledge concerning him. Let us see, therefore, whether what I have just said is true also in those matters relating to the divine Joseph.

The account about him reads as follows: *These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending to the sheep with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and of Zilpah, his father's wives, and Joseph accused them of bad conduct before Israel his father. Now Jacob loved Joseph more than all his other sons, because he was the son of his old age, and he made a coat of many colors for him. When his brothers saw that his father loved him more than all his other sons, they hated him and were not able to speak peaceably to him.*⁶

2. The writer of the book has composed an accurate enumeration of those descended from Esau.⁷ The sacred Scripture here instructs us concerning who was born from whom, which land each of them inhabited, and which of them attained to rulership. There is nothing, however, as regards noble character, nor mention of worthy deeds done by any of them. The passage, in effect, consists entirely of a list of those named, and is little in comparison with what is related concerning the divine Joseph. For those in the lineage of Jacob distinct narratives have been composed.

Now Joseph was younger than the others (he was seventeen years old), yet he did not shy away from the hard work of shepherding, but took part unreservedly in the same pursuits as the other brothers. He did not attach any value to an easy life, which those in their youth generally find pleasing and agreeable. He did not shun the unwelcome cares of life, nor did he prefer to leave things undone, as if he were still just a boy. Rather, he already had the reasoning powers of an older person, possessing a well-advanced mind, and employing the speech of

5. Or "similitudes," "representations." Cyril is of course referring to the many types and figures of the OT.

6. Gn 37.2–4.

7. Referring to Gn 36.

the mature,⁸ so giving an anticipation of the wonderful nature of his future brilliance. [288] Indeed, he suitably amazed his blessed and loving father, and was counted especially worthy of his love and care. For Joseph was, it says, *the son of Jacob's old age*. And what is the significance of this? Our account here delves into our human dispositions. There is not anything at all equal to, or greater than, the affections that parents have for their children. Nature, in fact, frequently gets the better of the mind and overpowers it, and I reckon that nature is able to persuade us that a child is somewhat needier than others, as though it actually required greater care and attention. On occasion, with regard to many of those born, the situation is different. Somehow the excessive love of the parent fades and finally reaches an end, the earlier affection in some way later being overcome. For the human mind has a tendency to love what is new. While it does not completely rid itself of its former excesses over previous things, nor the things it presently has, it sets great store by what has recently been procured, and has a much stronger desire for things that are new.

Therefore, the divine Jacob loved Joseph more than the others, because he was the son of his old age. Yet, I suppose someone might say about this—how can the divine Joseph be understood as the son of his old age when Benjamin was born after him?⁹ One can surely see that, even though it was Leah that Jacob married first in Haran, he actually loved Rachel, who gave birth to Joseph, and who died giving birth to Benjamin. In this regard, we may say that both of these were in fact sons of his old age.

Now the natural cleverness of Joseph with respect to absolutely everything was unequalled among all others. The maturity granted to him, and which he manifested, was completely unique. Most probably he thought that he would be someone famous and important. Since he gave no thought to the boisterousness of youth, and was already acting like a man, how can he not be considered a marvel?

8. Lit. "of the grey-haired."

9. The Harleian Codex includes this addition of this sentence, which the flow of thought seems to require.

So the blessed Jacob made new things for Joseph, more so than for his other sons. He wove him a coat of many colors, honoring him with garments fit for the most eminent of people. What happened as a result of this? The sons of Zilpah and Bilhah were provoked to anger, and at these things they were caused the most extraordinary vexation. The sons of the free woman, Leah, were also envious of the young man. Yet the lad had in fact done them no wrong. But it was the father's affection and the natural genius of the boy that kindled within them the burning fire of unrighteous malice. In the first instance, they assailed him with their words, railing furiously at him and tearing him apart in the same way that the lad would be taunted by his enemies. It is to this, I believe, that it refers when it says, *Joseph accused them of bad conduct before Israel their father*. These onslaughts were then but the beginnings¹⁰ of their godless scheming, the castigations and mockery by an unbridled tongue deployed to serve their jealousy.

The reason this most vehement hostility was kindled within them was that God foreshowed to the young man that he would one day be famous and admired, superior to his brothers, and crowned with the utmost glory. This challenge befell him, I suppose, so as to spur on the youth to pursue virtue. In a way this is like trainers preparing young athletes. They stir them up to more daring enterprises,¹¹ and persuade them [289] to endure hardship by telling them beforehand what the prizes will be which those organizing the games will liberally confer upon those who win. They tell them of the acclamations of the spectators, the praises, and the applause. Similarly the God of all, when he sees a well-disposed person,¹² who stands out as having a genuine and excellent heart, and who gives careful attention to all that is noble, he then calls that person to take hold of that which is good. He reveals to him beforehand the things that are to come, and so deliberately stirs him up to a ready willingness, that is, a willingness for what is virtuous.

So then, on one occasion a vision and heavenly message was

10. Lit. "firstfruits."

11. Var. "thinking" or "mind."

12. Lit. "soul."

delivered to the young man Joseph, and I would imagine that he caused some astonishment to his brothers when he communicated it to them. *He said, "Listen to this dream that I dreamed: I saw that we were binding sheaves out in the field, and my sheaf arose and stood upright, and your sheaves turned and bowed down to my sheaf." The brothers said to him, "Will you indeed reign over us, or have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more because of his dreams and his words.*¹³

See, then, how their maliciousness arises and grows, and in a way the matters revealed in the dreams provided some sort of fuel for their jealousy. Since they were wholly and utterly given over to vexation to begin with, especially over the fact Joseph should be honored, how unbearable would it be for them to be brought to bow down, and to treat him as being of the highest and most noble rank?

It is worth observing that jealousy always proceeds in an ungodly fashion, and in every instance leads to evil. We find that it is blind and extremely wild, as well as being opposed to God. For note that when God announced to Joseph his future glory and fame—and it is necessary here to understand clearly that God does not decide to do things like this for those not worthy to take hold of heavenly honors—then the others should have rejoiced over such a distinguished brother, who now possessed such a hope and was privileged with divine favor. Yet they did not do this. Rather, they were provoked to extreme envy, and raged like wild animals. Further, they found fault, in effect, with God, who promised to give him this glory and who foretold that he would be a person of some importance.

This same thing, we find, is what happened in the case of Cain and Abel. For while the God of all found Abel's sacrifice worthy of approval, and fire came down from heaven and received the offering, he had no regard for that of Cain. Immediately Cain was filled with murderous envy, and, directing his wrath at the one who enjoyed the favor of heaven, he deceived his brother, and, what is more, he utterly destroyed him. In such instances jealousy always takes matters to an extreme.

Yet what was the interpretation of the visions? We take the

13. Gn 37:6–8.

sheaf as a sign of a future time. The rising up of one sheaf in reality indicates something eminent in glory. So then, that the time would come when the divine Joseph would indeed be glorious, and the rest of the brothers would also fall down before him, as it were, and be subject to him, Joseph's sheaf figuratively portrayed when the sheaves of the others bowed to it.

The revelations given to Joseph in his dream, however, were not limited to these things, but [292] he saw another dream, and again he told it to his blessed father and his brothers. *He saw another dream*, it says, *and he related it to his father and his brothers. He said, "Behold, I dreamed another dream: the sun, moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me." Then his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?" So his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.*¹⁴

The old man was clever and eminently endowed with wisdom from above. For he did in fact understand the implications¹⁵ of the visions, and he rebuked the boy, saying, "*Shall I and your mother and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?*" What can this mean, but that this manner of rebuke was both necessary and wise? For with innate cleverness he restrained the jealousy of those who had heard the dreams, and in a certain way he also curbed the insufferable and excessive boldness which the young man exuded in abundance, and called him to a milder manner of conduct. But he did not let the hope that the dreams had given the lad be depreciated by his brothers. Yet neither did he lightly esteem the respect due to himself as a father, as though Joseph should seize his future preeminence before the time came. See, then, how skillfully Jacob softens the unwelcome effect of the visions.

Now Rachel, who had given birth to Joseph, had already died. Yet Jacob said, "*Shall I and your mother bow down to you?*" But he did this, as I just said, to bring down the high-mindedness of the young man, and to ease the jealousy of the brothers that had been stirred up against him.

14. Gn 37:9-11.

15. Lit. "force."

Jacob himself actually expected the dreams to come to pass. For he had not been listening inattentively, nor did he overlook the importance of the words, as though he had taken them to be meaningless. But *he kept the matter in mind*, because he was confident perhaps that these things would be fulfilled in due course.

After the account of the dreams, the brothers set off together to graze the flocks in Shechem. Then, when a short space of time had passed, the father urged young Joseph to go and visit his brothers. *He said, "Are not your brothers tending the flocks in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them."* And Joseph answered him, *"Here I am."* Israel then said to him, *"Go and see if your brothers and the sheep are well, and bring me word."*¹⁶ Then Joseph agreed to go most willingly, and so he set out and left the valley of Hebron.

When Joseph was wandering around the wilderness, he happened to meet someone who asked him why he was there, and where and to whom he was going. In response to this Joseph immediately replied, *"I am looking for my brothers. Can you tell me where they are grazing the flocks?"* The man said to him, *"They have moved on from here, for I heard them saying, 'Let us go to Dothan.'"*¹⁷

As Joseph was approaching that place, there was an unexpected plot against him. For the earlier jealousy seemed to be still active at that time. So the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, the maidservants, were eager to kill him. [293] *They said, "Behold, that dreamer is coming. Come now, and let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; and we shall say, 'A wild animal has devoured him.' Then we shall see what will become of his dreams!"* Reuben heard this, and he tried to deliver him from their hands, saying, *"Let us not take his life."* Reuben said to them, *"Do not shed blood. Throw him into one of these pits in the wilderness, but do not raise a hand against him."* He said this in order to deliver him from their hands and return him to his father.¹⁸ So removing the coat of many colors, they put Joseph down into a pit alive, though he would soon die.¹⁹

Then some Ishmaelites, traders in spices, were making their

16. Gn 37.13-14.

17. Cf. Gn 37.15-17.

18. Gn 37.19-22.

19. Cf. Gn 37.23-24.

way to Egypt. Judah made the decision (for he had evidently appealed for them not to kill their brother), and they sold the boy to the traders, who were willing to pay twenty pieces of gold for him. And so Joseph was carried off to Egypt.²⁰

Reuben, however, did not see what had happened. He came to the pit, and when he did not see the boy, he supposed him to have suffered some kind of danger. So he tore his garments, and blamed his brothers for what had happened to Joseph. *He said, "The boy is no more. And as for me, where shall I go now?"*²¹ In effect this meant, "How can I return to our father, or how will he welcome us back without the son he so loved? What shall we say when our father asks about the boy?"

So they dipped the coat of many colors in goat's blood and brought it to their father. They fabricated a story full of guile and deceit, *and they said, "We found this. See now if it is your son's coat or not."*²² The father began to lament, perhaps also to some degree crying out against his sons' jealousy and ungodly scheming, *and he said, "A wild animal has devoured Joseph."*²³ It was impossible for him to be consoled, and he paid no heed at all to their attempts. He responded to the fate of the boy with despair, for it says, *He did not wish to be comforted, and said, "I will go down to the grave"*²⁴ *to my son, mourning.*²⁵

Moving now beyond the bounds of the literal sense, inquiry will be further made into the interpretation of inner meanings. By filling in the shadows, which are things perceived by the senses, with the colors of the truth, the extraordinary beauty of the spiritual contemplation will be unfolded, as we are able.

3. Now the wife who had given birth to Joseph was the younger Rachel, the one beautiful in appearance, with bright eyes that radiated beams of charm. Yet Leah did not have such an attraction. How do we know this? Because it is written, "Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was fine-looking, with an extremely beau-

20. Cf. Gn 37:25–28.

21. Cf. Gn 37:29–30.

22. Gn 37:32.

23. Gn 37:33.

24. Or "Hades."

25. Cf. Gn 37:35.

tiful face.”²⁶ Leah, we say, is the mother of the Jews, that is, the synagogue. We obtain proof of this both from the description of her eyes, and from the meaning of her name. For the inner, spiritual sight of the Jewish synagogue is in actual fact devoid of beauty and greatly infirm, since “they have eyes, but do not see,” as the prophet says.²⁷ For they were not acquainted with the writings of Moses, nor were they inclined to examine the mysteries present in them, through which Emmanuel is portrayed in many different ways. Also, as we have stated elsewhere, Leah means “laboring.”²⁸ For the Jewish synagogue labored under the heavy and intolerable burden of the law given through Moses. Accordingly, Christ [296] calls those who are laboring and burdened to the liberty that comes through faith, saying, “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest.”²⁹

Whereas Leah was of such a nature, the eyes of Rachel were very pure. For the church of the Gentiles saw the glory of Christ, and beheld the Father in him. The church was called to communion with Christ as his spiritual bride, following the first bride. For this younger bride has no defect,³⁰ while the first has aged³¹ and become old, and is ready to disappear.³²

Now the name Rachel means “flock of God.”³³ For the church is the flock of the Savior, who spoke to the Jews through one of the holy prophets and said, “I will not be your shepherd. What is to die, let it die, and what is to perish, let it perish. Let those that remain eat one another’s flesh.”³⁴ But concerning us he says, “My sheep hear my voice and follow me, and I will give them eternal life.” He is therefore a good shepherd, and he is preeminent in all things.³⁵

26. Gn 29.17.

27. Jer 5.21.

28. The Hebrew verb *lā’āh*, with which the name Leah seems to be cognate, indicates a state of weariness.

29. Mt 11.28.

30. Lit. “wrinkle”; cf. Eph 5.27.

31. Var. “turned grey.”

32. Cf. Heb 8.13.

33. The Hebrew term *rāhēl* means “ewe.”

34. Zec 11.9.

35. Cf. Jn 10.14; Col 1.18.

Yet, since he became one of us, he is also called a sheep. And so the wise John pointed him out to the people of the Jews, saying, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."³⁶ Many thousands of animals were sacrificed as types under the law, but not one of them wiped away the sin of the world, for "it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin."³⁷ But it is the Lamb without blemish, the true and perfect sacrifice, who has taken away the sin of the world. So then, he too is reckoned to be a sheep along with us. And for this reason he is also called a son of the church, being the firstborn among brothers.³⁸

One ought to know also that Joseph means "added by God" or "growth of God." For the holy assembly of the children of the church is always growing. Therefore, she was told, "Lift your eyes, look around, O Zion, and see them all. Behold, they have gathered together and have come to you."³⁹ And again, "Behold, they come from afar, some from the north, and some from the west, and others from the land of the Persians."⁴⁰ Further, it is written somewhere in the Acts of the Apostles that "the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."⁴¹ And also, "More and more people believed and were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women."⁴² In the spiritual sense then, Joseph, as I have already said before, is suitably interpreted as those in Christ, namely those added by God.

So it would be quite accurate for us to say that Joseph indicates Christ under the present economy and those who believe in him. For he himself is indeed the head, and we are the body and individually members of it.⁴³ Also, he is the vine, and we are like the branches that grow upon it,⁴⁴ joined together in the unity of the Spirit through sanctification.

36. Jn 1.29.

37. Heb 10.4.

38. Rom 8.29.

39. Is 49.18.

40. Is 49.12.

41. Acts 2.47.

42. Acts 5.14.

43. Cf. 1 Cor 12.27.

44. Cf. Jn 15.5.

It says that Joseph was seventeen years old. Here, the Scripture is drawing to our attention, I suppose, the fact that he was just a youth. Yet we say too that Emmanuel himself was the youngest with respect to certain others, since we may ascribe a seniority in regard to time to those who came before him [297], such as Moses and the prophets. So, examining the meaning of those things written, we shall consider that something else is signified by them. For the number of years will also perhaps portray to us somehow the profound mystery of the economy of the Incarnation. And the way in which it does this I will try to explain as clearly as I am able, recalling what I have already said elsewhere.

4. It is customary for the sacred Scripture, with respect to numbers that are repeated after reaching their prescribed end, that they be taken as symbols of perfection. This is what I mean: if one counts up to ten, and wishes to extend his calculation further, he will begin again with a single unit, and so he will continue all the way to the end.⁴⁵ Likewise with a series of seven days.⁴⁶ Beginning at the first day, he will count in order up to the seventh. Accordingly, when one has reached the end of the number of days, one comes back again to the first.

So then, the sacred word deems that numbers like this should be taken by us as symbolic. With regard to the distribution of the talents, for instance, and the future allotment of rewards in proportion to one's industriousness in the work of God, it says that the one who had received ten talents should also be appointed over ten cities. That the gifts are given in equal proportion to the total perfection of those thus honored, Christ, the distributor of these things, here shows. Also, a certain one of the saints said that the barren woman would give birth to seven children.⁴⁷ Seven is here put in the place of many, and would be reckoned as a perfect number by those who like to work out the significance of numbers.

45. Cyril appears to be referring here to the decimal counting system, in which, after reaching a tenth, the number one is reintroduced followed by a sequence leading back up to a tenth.

46. *hebdomas*, "a heptad, group of seven."

47. For "ten cities," Lk 19.17; "seven children," 1 Sm 2.5.

When, therefore, it states concerning Joseph that he was *ten and seven years old*,⁴⁸ we grant that Emmanuel consisted of one Christ and Son, composed of two perfections—of both deity and humanity. For we do not accept the opinion of some who consider that the divine temple, which the divine Logos⁴⁹ possessed from the holy Virgin, was void of a rational soul. But as he was perfect in his deity, so also in his humanity, while existing as a single being in a way that is ineffable and beyond understanding. The number ten, then, indicates to us in a hidden manner⁵⁰ perfection of deity. This being so, seven further indicates perfection of humanity, being less than the ten relating to perfection in the Trinity, yet being added to it and, as it were, attached to it. For the seven comes after the number ten.⁵¹ The divine Logos⁵² from the Father exists within the excellence of the Trinity, that is, the Godhead. But the human element is inferior to and less than the glory of God. The divine Logos is understood to be preexisting, while that which is human is joined to him. Therefore, the number ten is necessarily placed first, and seven is added on. This is what it means, then, when it says Joseph was *ten and seven years old*.

Note my concern for both that which is temporary and that which is without beginning, with respect to the age of Emmanuel that is. For as regards the matter of counting his years, he was in fact just like Joseph, yet he had eternal past existence in addition. For he was indeed called to a manner of birth which is to be understood as being just like ours, and on account of his humanity he was assigned a number of years, even though as the Word he is God, and eternal past existence is wholly applicable to him. For he is also to be understood as being truly coeternal with God the Father, as the divine John said [300], “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”⁵³

48. In Gn 37.2 the LXX literally phrases Joseph’s age as “ten seven.” The Hebrew text, however, has “seven ten.”

49. See n. 52 below.

50. Lit. “in a riddle,” “in a puzzle.”

51. Cyril is still speaking of the sequence of the numerals as appearing in the LXX text.

52. *Theos Logos*, “the God-Word”; also two sentences later.

53. Jn 1.1.

So I say once again, the divine Joseph was seventeen years old, and he tended his father's flocks with his brothers, the sons of Zilpah and Bilhah, that is, the sons of the maidservants. So it was that the Word came from God, and as a human being he walked up and down the land of the Jews, restoring the lost sheep of the house of Israel to the love of God the Father. For as the blessed Paul writes, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself."⁵⁴

Now Emmanuel acted as shepherd for those who were born to bondage, those who were in a way like the sons of the two maidservants, of illegitimate birth, whose lot was not to be free-born. For after the reign of Jeroboam, the ten tribes were no longer content with Jerusalem, and so they went off and dwelt in Samaria, with Jeroboam leading them on in this matter. Yet there they went astray and worshiped the golden calves. For this reason, God brought charges against them as being two women who played the harlot. This is what he said through the mouth of Ezekiel: "Son of man, there were two women, daughters of the same mother. They played the harlot in Egypt, acting immorally in their youth. There their breasts fell, there they lost their virginity. The older one was named Oholah, and her sister was named Oholibah. They became mine, and they gave birth to sons and daughters. As for their names, Oholah is Samaria, and Oholibah is Jerusalem."⁵⁵

So the Son,⁵⁶ having taken on our nature, became a shepherd along with those born in bondage and harlotry. For those of Israel who were preeminent in the matters of the law taught the people, and yet Christ too taught those who came to him, instructing them in the mysteries and bringing them into the path of truth. And that path was himself. That is why he said, "I am the way."⁵⁷ The scribes and Pharisees, however, who gloried in their code of laws, fed the people upon thorns and thistles, upon error, on the doctrines and commandments of men. But Christ fed them upon good pasture, on fresh grass, as it were,

54. 2 Cor 5.19.

55. Ezek 23.2-4.

56. Var. add "of God, the Word."

57. Jn 14.6.

this being the most excellent and wonderful knowledge of the gospel teachings. Those other shepherds were unconcerned and defective, and what is more they were slaves to unjust gain, insane with boundless greed. They consumed the milk, clothed themselves in the wool, and slaughtered the fatlings, as stated by the prophet.⁵⁸ They were uncaring hirelings, considering it not the least bit worthwhile to exert themselves on behalf of the sheep.

As the sons of Zilpah and Bilhah found fault with Joseph, so also that cantankerous bunch of godless Pharisees brought false accusations against Emmanuel, even daring to impugn his glory. Impiously, they called him a Samaritan and a drunkard. They said, moreover, that he was influenced by demonic forces, empowered by the working of Beelzebul to drive [301] the evil spirits out of the afflicted.

Therefore, speaking through the mouth of the prophet, Emmanuel himself cries out against the prating of the Jews, saying, "Woe to them, for they have turned away from me. They are wretched, because they have sinned against me. Though I redeemed them, they spoke lies against me."⁵⁹ And again it says, "Their rulers will fall by the sword, because of their unbridled tongue."⁶⁰ So then, that horde of insolent and narrow-minded Pharisees prated against Christ. And this, I believe, corresponds to the brothers bringing false charges against Joseph.

It says that Joseph was beloved by his father, because he was the son of his old age. Now even before our Savior manifested himself in the world in flesh, there were other shepherds who were good and noble. First of all, there was the divine Moses, and then following him a succession of those who tended the spiritual flocks. The Father, however, had an especial love for the Son, even though he was after the others, having come in the latter times of the world. While it is quite appropriate that Jacob should have Joseph as a son of his old age, God himself does not grow old. He has no beginning, nor does he increase in age, but he is ever perfect. Seeing it is wise for our remarks

58. Cf. Ezek 34.3.

59. Hos 7.13.

60. Hos 7.16.

not to stray far from our proper subject matter, we only say that Emmanuel was like a son born to God the Father in old age, since he came at the end times of the world, namely the present age, and after him there is no other. We expect to be saved by no one else. Indeed, he alone is sufficient, because we say that the salvation and life of the world lie in no other. He will shepherd us forever, as the psalmist says,⁶¹ and we will be placed under the care of this beloved one. He appeared, as I just mentioned, in the latter times of the world, and in flesh, although he preexisted as God. We say in fact that he is coeternal with the Father.

Joseph, then, was especially loved by his father. He gave him a multicolored coat as a special gift, something that stands as a clear indication of his affection. For his brothers, however, this was a provocation to jealousy and a cause of envy, as the outcome of these matters demonstrates. The Pharisees likewise were enraged at the one who was beloved, that is, at Christ, because of the manifold⁶² glory from God the Father with which he had been clothed. For, I believe, he became a cause of wonder in many ways—as the giver of life, as light and illuminator of those in darkness, as he who cleanses lepers, who raises the dead when they are already decomposing, who rebukes the sea, and who by his authority is carried upon its waves. The Jews, then, being so perplexed and consumed with an insufferable and burning envy, said to one another, “What shall we do? This man is performing many signs.”⁶³ The multicolored coat, therefore, is a representation⁶⁴ to us of the manifold glory with which God the Father is said to have clothed the Son when he became human like us. Yet, with regard to his own proper nature, he is himself the [304] Lord of glory, even though, because of his likeness to us in the economy of his Incarnation, he might say, “Father, glorify your Son.”⁶⁵

61. Cf. Ps 48.14 (47.15 LXX).

62. Lit. “multiform.” The word is intended to echo the description of Joseph’s coat.

63. Jn 11.47.

64. Lit. “puzzle,” “hint.”

65. Jn 16.1.

So, for the reasons I have just stated, those sons born to the maidservants were induced to vexation. In addition to this, they became suspicious at the telling of the dreams. For having learned ahead of time how they themselves would later become subject to their brother and bow down to him, and that he would be greatly superior to them and exalted to such a glory so that even those who had given them birth would bow to him, they gnashed their teeth and resolved to murder him.

The Jews, too, were incited and not a little vexed when they learned that Emmanuel would be superior to the holy patriarchs themselves, and that all the people, or rather the whole world, would bow down to him. When they understood this, they said, "This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and take possession of his inheritance."⁶⁶ They spoke like this even though the blessed David plainly says to the incarnate Only-Begotten, "All the nations that you have made shall come and bow down before you, Lord."⁶⁷ On another occasion also, he makes evident the envy and unholy wrath of the people of Israel against Christ when he says, "The Lord reigns, let the people rage."⁶⁸

Having, then, sufficiently demonstrated the cruel and unrestrained envy of the Jews, it is the appropriate time for us now to speak of their intolerable and murderous undertakings. Here we shall concentrate throughout upon the literal account and yet also bring out the intent with respect to the Only-Begotten becoming man. The account, in fact, brings us again to this subject.

5. So the divine Joseph was impelled by the command of his father to go to Shechem, that he should pay a visit to his brothers to see if they were well, and how they were managing in tending to the flocks. And so he went, but he was not able to find them, at least not in Shechem, as they had left there for Dothan. When the brothers saw him coming, they gave a bitter and disdainful laugh, and said, "*Behold, here comes that dreamer.*" Reuben tried to forestall their determination to kill him, but they put Joseph down one of the pits, disregarding Reuben's ad-

66. Mt 21.38.

67. Ps 86.9 (85.9 LXX).

68. Ps 99.1 (98.1 LXX).

vice. After a short space of time they drew the youngster up out of the pit and sold him to the Ishmaelites, who took him down to Egypt. When Reuben returned to the pit and did not find the boy there, he supposed that he was already dead, the victim of a godless deed done by murderers, one that was grievously heavy to bear. So while Joseph was carried down to Egypt, his father mourned, and continued to do so with great lamentation.

Now our Lord Jesus Christ was sent from God the Father to come and visit the people of Israel, to see if they continued to enjoy good health, with regard to their spiritual condition that is, and whether the sheep under their care were faring well, being treated reasonably by the shepherds.

The shepherds, however, were not found in Shechem, but in Dothan. Shechem means "shoulder." This signifies hard work. For the inspired Scripture makes use of the shoulder sometimes as a figure of strength, and sometimes of work. Thus we say, "Put your heart into your shoulders," that is, to do hard work. As for Dothan, this means "great lack."⁶⁹ For the people of Israel were deficient, not in [305] the virtue of being hardworking, nor in having good repute with respect to the law, but they were evidently greatly lacking in righteousness and all goodness. For not one of them was righteous; there was no one doing good, not even one.⁷⁰ Rather, as God says through the prophet, they only honored him with their tongues, while their minds were elsewhere,⁷¹ and though they sought to comply with the regulations given through Moses, their hearts had removed themselves far away, for they devoted themselves only to the teachings and commandments of men.

Despite this, they did in fact recognize the Beloved, the spiritual Joseph, when he came to them in human flesh.⁷² For the blessed evangelist John said, "Yet even many of the rulers believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they did not confess it."⁷³ So, since they recognized him, they maltreated him. For

69. It is unclear how Cyril, or his source, arrives at this meaning.

70. Cf. Rom 3.10, 12; Ps 14.1, 3 (13.1, 3 LXX).

71. Cf. Is 29.13.

72. Var. omit "in human flesh."

73. Jn 12.42.

those wretched men killed him and, as it were, put him down into a pit—the deep, dark pit of death, which is Hades. For this is what the divine David, as though adopting the role of Christ, indicates to us when he says to God the Father in heaven, “Lord, you brought my soul up out of Hades; you saved me from among those going down into the pit.”⁷⁴

Observe the import⁷⁵ of the words of the sacred Scriptures, and their great exactness. *The pit*, it says, *was empty; there was no water in it.*⁷⁶ By this means it indicates to us most clearly that Hades is here being symbolized. And how is this, I ask? Because water in actual fact represents life, since it sustains life. So it says that there was no water in the pit, for Hades is not unreasonably understood to be a dwelling place that lacks life. Yet the youth was brought up. So also Christ came back to life from the dead, for the pit could not hold on to him. Neither did Christ remain in Hades, but rather he emptied it out, for to those who were in bonds God says, “Come out!”⁷⁷

After the divine Joseph was brought up and sold to the Ishmaelites, who were spice merchants, he came to Egypt, not far away. Likewise, Christ came back to life and rose up out of the pit. Leaving Judea, he passed through the lands of the Gentiles, being conveyed there by those who were spiritual Ishmaelites, that is, those who obey God, for that is what the word means.⁷⁸ And who are these? They are the blessed disciples, whose ear is inclined to the teachings of Christ, who are the firstfruits of those greatly approved in matters of obedience and faith, and in the glory that surpasses the law. Such might also aptly be understood to be merchants of spices, spreading the fragrance of the mystery of Christ, and having every kind of virtue applied to their souls. After a certain fashion, these had bought Jesus, forsaking all the wonders present in the law, and they purchased that one most precious pearl which the Savior himself spoke

74. Ps 30.3 (29.4 LXX).

75. Var. “soberness.”

76. Gn 37.24.

77. Cf. Is 49.9.

78. The name Ishmael is derived from the Hebrew word for “hear” (cf. Gn 16.11), which can also have connotations of obedience.

of in the parable.⁷⁹ These took Christ to the nations, serving as ministers of the gospel, everywhere [308] under the sun proclaiming him as God and Lord, as the choice stone, rejected by those spiritual builders under the law, yet choice and precious to God, having become the chief cornerstone.⁸⁰

It was the case, however, that Reuben prevented the brothers from murdering Joseph, and Judah too was extremely troubled over the affair. Reuben was the firstborn, and the kingship was called forth from the tribe of Judah. And so, as many who were privileged to share in the likeness of the firstborn, even though they were of the Jews, these were called into the kingdom of heaven, devoting themselves to the message given through Christ. These were not a little troubled over the outrageous acts done against him. For there were a good many at that time, both in Jerusalem and in the rest of Judea, who were grieved and sympathetic towards Christ over the shameful way he was treated.

The father mourned Joseph, and it says, *he did not wish to be comforted*. In this we see how the rage and bloodthirsty scheming of the Jews against Christ exceedingly grieved God the Father in heaven. They caused such great offense that no comfort could be accepted, and it was as if no one could make appeals on their behalf. The prophets had indeed made frequent appeals to Israel, beseeching them to be saved, and yet they had done things to the prophets that are too indescribable for words. God had often shown his forbearance, for it was members of his own household who were exposing themselves to danger. But when they vented their rage against Christ himself, the Father could not be comforted. His wrath was implacable. For it was no longer just any prophet who suffered maltreatment, but the Savior of all, the Master of the prophets, namely Christ, through whom and with whom be glory to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

79. Cf. Mt 13.45-46.

80. Cf. Is 28.16; Ps 118.22 (117.22 LXX).

Concerning Judah and Tamar

1. It is the intent of inspired Scripture to indicate to us the mystery of Christ through innumerable objects. Someone might compare it to a magnificent and illustrious city that does not have just one image of its king, but very many, set up everywhere and visible to all. Observe how Scripture does not fail to fulfill this purpose in any single account, but it is present in all. Even if the literal record should seem to contain something inappropriate, this in no way prevents such a purpose being achieved, and what is present in it may be suitably unfolded. For it is not the purpose of Scripture to bring accusations against the lives of the saints. Not at all. Rather, it is to portray⁸¹ to us the knowledge of this mystery, that the message spoken concerning it may be both clear and true, unable to be censured in any way, as though it were perverting the truth. So too the mystery of the economy relating to the Savior is depicted to us in the affair of Judah and Tamar.

It says, *It happened at that time that Judah left his brothers and went down to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah. There Judah saw the daughter of a Canaanite, whose name was Shua,⁸² and he took her and went into her. She conceived and [309] gave birth to a son, and she⁸³ called his name Er. She conceived again, and gave birth to a son, and called his name Onan. Then once more she bore a son, and called his name Shelah.⁸⁴* So these three children were born to Judah.

When the boys had become young men, Judah took Tamar as a wife for his firstborn son, Er. But as Er was evil in the sight of God, before they had produced any children, he died. For it says, *God killed him.*⁸⁵ Then the father enjoined Onan to sleep with his brother's wife and to raise up offspring for the deceased. But since the child would not be his own, he violat-

81. Or "represent figuratively."

82. Cyril called her Saba.

83. Or "he."

84. Gn 38.1-5. For this last name Cyril follows the LXX in transcribing it as *Sêlôm*.

85. Gn 38.7.

ed the law of procreation, spilling his semen on the ground so that no seed was imparted. Immediately, he too was destroyed by the divine wrath.⁸⁶ When this happened, Judah was then afraid to give his third son, Shelah, to Tamar in marriage. The cause of his fear was that perhaps this son should likewise perish. As a reason for not proceeding with the marriage, he made the excuse that the child was not quite fully grown. *He said to his daughter-in-law, "Remain as a widow in your father's house until Shelah my son has grown up." For he thought, "Lest this son also die, like his brothers." So Tamar went and stayed in her father's house.*⁸⁷

When some time had passed, Tamar could no longer bear the delay in marriage. By now she had somehow come to realize that her father-in-law would not fulfill what had been promised her. Rather, the delay was a pretense, and there was no hope of what she expected coming to pass. And what plot was it that she devised in response to this? It says, *Tamar his daughter-in-law was told, "Behold, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep." So she removed her widow's clothing, and put on a veil, she made herself look attractive, and sat by the gates of Enaim, which is on the way to Timnah. For she had seen that Judah's son Shelah was now grown up, but he had not given her to him as his wife.*⁸⁸

When Judah saw her, he supposed her to be a prostitute, since she had covered her face and he did not recognize her. Then he was seized by lust, and when the woman asked for payment, he promised to send her a goat, and as a pledge of the promise he gave her his staff, his ring, and his signet-cord, that is, an ornament worn around the neck.⁸⁹ (One might suppose, and quite appropriately so, that Judah was a Chaldean, since he was inclined to be adorned in a particular way. For the Chaldeans were lovers of ornaments, bedecking their hands and necks with gold, and sometimes even adorning their hair with it. For it was considered by them to be manly, a token of very high birth and of the praises due to manliness.) So these things being done, Judah carried on with his original intentions.

86. Cf. Gn 38.9-10.

87. Cf. Gn 38.11.

88. Gn 38.13-14.

89. Cf. Gn 38.15-18.

Now Tamar was brought to the home of her father [312], and later had the good fortune to find out that she was pregnant. When Judah learned of this, he said it was necessary for the woman to die, since she had committed an act of immorality. Finally, however, she showed him the staff and the other objects, saying, *"I am carrying a child by the man to whom these things belong."* She said, *"See if you recognize who it is that this ring, signet-cord, and staff belong to."* Judah recognized them and said, *"Tamar is more righteous than I am, inasmuch as I would not give her to Shelah my son."* And he did not sleep with her again.⁹⁰

Then it says, *When she came to give birth, there were twins in her womb. As she was giving birth, one of them put out his hand, and the midwife tied a scarlet thread around it, and said, "This one will come out first." But then he drew back his hand, and immediately his brother came out. She said, "What a breach you have made for yourself!" So she called his name "Perez."*⁹¹ *After this his brother, who had the scarlet thread on his hand, came out, and she called his name Zerah.*⁹²

This is all I need to relate of the literal account. Yet, hidden within this, once again there is an important spiritual meaning. What this might be, we shall presently examine.

2. First of all, I think it needful to say that though there might be those in the inspired Scripture who distinguish themselves by doing extremely irreverent deeds, since God is well able to provide what is necessary for our profit, we shall be far removed from the harm that can come from stumbling at these offenses. If we take into account the need for us to be wise and prudent, then those things most profitable with respect to the divine economy will not escape our notice.

For let us consider that even the blessed prophet Hosea once obtained for himself a prostitute as a wife. He did not shy away from such a scandalous marriage, and he became known as the father of abominable children whose names were "Not my people" and "Not shown mercy."⁹³

90. Cf. Gn 38.24-26.

91. This name in Hebrew means "break out" or "break through."

92. Gn 38.27-30. In Hebrew Zerah denotes "brightness," possibly referring to the color of the thread.

93. Cf. Hos 1.2-3, 6-9.

What this matter was all about and for what reasons it was done we will not shrink from discussing. For since those considered to be most prominent persons opposed the preaching of Israel's prophets and refused to accept the divine word, actions like this were performed by those holy men at that time. The reason for this was so that, seeing in what was enacted matters to be fulfilled in the future as though visibly and clearly written on a tablet, the Israelites might apply their minds to the discovery of what was beneficial, and that they themselves might pass on what was profitable and important to understand, and that others might also be persuaded to respond. For they learned that at some future period they would no more be God's people nor be classed among those shown mercy, but they would be hardened and unloved. Had they not become sick of such things and shown to be thoroughly guilty? So the prophet cohabiting with the prostitute was a representation of God, who, after a fashion, was living together with the immoral and utterly defiled woman of the Jewish synagogue, from whom he brought forth children.

Seeing, therefore, that we now understand the way in which things are accommodated to the times in which they took place, we shall willingly cease, I say, from all outcry and finding fault with the immorality of Tamar and indeed of Judah too, but [313] rather we shall say it was a union that occurred by way of accommodation. In fact, Tamar longed for the offspring appropriate to a free woman and yet had been deprived of a legal spouse. Nor was Judah greatly at fault, since he only chose to go with another woman after the death of his first wife. To us this relationship was really a matter of spiritual union and spiritual generation, the physical act of giving birth in itself showing the outlines of the types. The human mind can in no other way be directed to the truth.

3. So then, Judah went down to a certain man, whose name was Hirah. This man was a herdsman and one skilled in handling flocks. While he was there, Judah saw Shua and married her, and he made her the mother of three children, namely Er, Onan, and Shelah. Now Er means "leathery," that is to say, fleshly. Onan was "one whose heart was struck." The third was "pull-

ing out,” that is to say, one who brings about a relaxation and who makes peace.⁹⁴

Likewise, the Only-Begotten Word of God came down from heaven, as though from a certain holy country, he being the one who is truly to be praised, and who naturally possesses the glory of the kingdom. For this is what the person of Judah represents to us. The meaning of his name is evidently “praise.”⁹⁵ And also the tribe of Judah was the most royal of all, and was assigned the highest preeminence. Accordingly, the divine Jacob pronounced this blessing upon him, saying, “Judah, your brothers will praise you.”⁹⁶ The most-wise Paul also testified that Christ, the one worthy of praise above all creation, originated from the tribe of Judah.⁹⁷

So the Only-Begotten Word of God came down and paid a visit to the blessed Moses as he was tending the sheep in the wilderness of Midian, for he appeared to him in the bush in the form of fire. Also, after a fashion, he was united through Moses to the synagogue of the Israelites in Egypt, as though to a foreign Canaanite woman, just as Judah, when he was tending the sheep, was joined to Shua, whose name means “highness” or “lifting up.”⁹⁸ For the synagogue of the Jews, having been called, as it were, into a relationship with God, was no longer humbled and downtrodden. Whereas she had been in a mean estate of servitude, she now became lifted up and prominent, for she was redeemed as though from a furnace for smelting iron, and from a house of bondage, as it is written.⁹⁹ In Egypt, in that synagogue which belonged to a foreign land and which was devoted to the worship of idols, there were then three peoples that held the place of sons with respect to God, and that were born, so to speak, from the same mother, though their births were separated in time. And how this is so, we shall presently explain.

Then Judah gave Tamar to Er, his firstborn, in marriage. But

94. While it is possible that in Hebrew Er might be related to leather and Shelah to the idea of relaxation, the other meanings are doubtful.

95. Cf. Gn 29.35.

96. Gn 49.8.

97. Cyril seems to be referring to Heb 7.14.

98. The name is, in fact, of uncertain meaning.

99. Cf. Ex 13.3; Dt 4.20.

as he was evil God killed him, and Onan, the second in order of birth and age, immediately succeeded him by marrying Tamar. He, however, did not wish to raise up offspring for his brother, and so being the object of divine wrath, he was killed like the first son. Then the father did not hand over the third son, Shelah, to join Tamar in marriage, fearing that he also might perish as well as the first two sons. [316]

What this matter is about I will try to explain as God gives me wisdom.¹⁰⁰ As for the first synagogue in Egypt, which we have established to be one that is foreign, because it had then become totally unrestrained in adopting both Gentile manners and customs, God reformed it. This he did through the conduct prescribed by the law. It was as though he had appointed a new synagogue, one that was quite different from the first. It is this that is indicated by Tamar.

Observe how the mystery is to be found in the meanings of names. For Tamar means "abandonment" or "shaken."¹⁰¹ So also the synagogue of the Jews was in actual fact shaken and abandoned. In what way? Well, the ministration according to the law did not continue unshakeable for ever, but gave way to the ministration in the Spirit. And when this ministration through Christ was introduced, it found fault with the former, since this new one was without fault. Now Christ betrothed the church to himself, as a pure virgin, and in doing so left the older, first bride. Therefore, the synagogue of the Jews can be fairly interpreted as abandoned and shaken.

Now the fact that "no one is justified before God by the law"¹⁰² and that in the Jewish synagogue there was no share in the peace of God (for, according to what is written, "the law produces wrath")¹⁰³ is figuratively portrayed by the birth of the sons of Judah who were united with Tamar. For Er the firstborn was "leathery," that is, earthly. As he was evil, he was condemned to death. The first people of God also showed themselves to be evil with respect to the truth. They grumbled against God and

100. Var. omit "as God gives me wisdom."

101. In Hebrew the name Tamar in fact means "date palm."

102. Cf. Gal 3.11.

103. Rom 4.15.

said, “Can God prepare a table in the wilderness? Though he struck the rock, and waters flowed forth and streams ran abundantly, can he also give bread?”¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, when the spies who were sent to the promised land came back, they at once began to wail like children about being completely undone, and by their disbelief they insulted the God who can do all things. Consequently, they perished, and none of them entered the promised land, but their corpses fell in the wilderness, as it is written.¹⁰⁵ So, the firstborn Er, namely the one who was evil and carnal, perished first, as he bore no fruit of godliness. This further shows us childlessness in the form of a type, for the sensible things are, as it were, images of spiritual things.¹⁰⁶

After the first, there came a second people, being those who were born, so to speak, as God’s son when he redeemed them and brought them out from the house of bondage. These were brought through the Jordan under the leadership of Joshua, and they inherited the promised land. After this they were ruled by judges. Yet they too fell under the disapprobation of heaven. This people were indeed Onan, that is, one who was struck in his heart. For remarkably they turned to polytheism, forsaking the one, true Being. And so this people were also ruined and made subject to foreigners, which is what the book named after those called judges teaches us.

So also did this people die in a state of childlessness, just like Er, because they had sown nothing upon the land. This, then, was a picture of complete failure to produce fruit, or to raise up offspring¹⁰⁷ for his brother. [317] This people coming in the middle, that is, the second in order of time, shrank back from their duty. They did not, through virtuous behavior in accordance with the law, raise up for God, as it were, any offspring in the place of those who had disobeyed him, who would show themselves through their actions to be those now growing up to be the new people of God. For this, I believe, is the figurative meaning of raising up offspring for his brother.

104. Ps 78.19–20 (77.19–20 LXX).

105. Heb 3.17; cf. Nm 14.29.

106. Or “of things in the mind.”

107. Lit. “seed.”

Two sons had now been taken away and could no more be the source of any blessings (for one was evil, the other was struck in his heart). The father then kept back his third son from being united to Tamar, fearing lest somehow he too would perish, just like those who had already died. Likewise, God did not permit the third and newest people, coming in the last times spoken of by the holy prophets (along with whom also the divine Baptist, their fellow, pointed out the one coming from heaven, namely Christ), to be held, so to speak, in the arms of the Jewish synagogue. Nor did he wish to have offspring from her, lest somehow that too should perish. "For the law produces wrath," and no one can ever be justified by it.

Note, then, how Shelah is especially shown to be a type of this last people, those who are a people through faith. For his name means "pulling out," or "releasing." For when the divine wrath was expended, as it were, upon those of the race of Israel on account of their profane acts and their insufferable raging against Christ, those who believed were pulled out, as though from the mouth of a wild beast. They were released, in a way, from the bonds that had seized hold of those for whom punishment was necessary. For, according to the Scriptures, "a remnant will be saved."¹⁰⁸ And so God said in a certain place through the mouth of the prophet, "As a shepherd pulls out from the mouth of a lion two legs or a piece of an ear, thus will the people of Israel be pulled out."¹⁰⁹ For this reason, then, Shelah is named "pulling out."

It is not difficult to discover, then, that those who believe are excused¹¹⁰ from union with Tamar, which is in order to bear fruit by the law, and they have been pulled out from the multitude of those who are perishing. As the blessed Paul said concerning the things he could boast of under the law, "But whatever gains I had, these things I counted as loss for the sake of Christ."¹¹¹ For he did not desire to have his own righteousness, by which I

¹⁰⁸ Is 10.22; Rom 9.27.

¹⁰⁹ Am 3.12.

¹¹⁰ Or "exempt."

¹¹¹ Phil 3.7.

mean that coming through the law, but the righteousness which comes by faith in Christ Jesus.

So Shelah, the youngest son, was not united with Tamar. For this reason, she remained a widow, continuing in this state for a long time. For when God no more allowed the Jewish synagogue to be fruitful, this widow, the spiritual bride, was called one who is childless and without husband, and she was in fact so, for in one place Christ said, "She is not my wife, and I am not her husband."¹¹²

Is this widow then completely disregarded after this? Is she no longer worthy of God's attention? Do not think so. Even though she was condemned for the acts of ungodliness that she had done last of all, because of his innate goodness God will show mercy to her in the final ages of the world, and she herself will also bear the fruit of the tokens of Christ. That she will later follow suit after the Gentiles, we learn through nothing other than those things written themselves. For when Judah went up to shear his sheep, he had intercourse with her on the way, [320] and let her have his staff, ring, and signet-cord, promising also to send her a goat. For Christ too, giving his own most serious attention to receiving, as it were, the fruit of the spiritual flock, meaning those who believe and who have been sanctified in the Spirit,¹¹³ will at some future time bring the Jewish synagogue, though being somewhat indifferent and not entirely willing, into the fellowship of the Spirit. Then he will show her to be fruitful, being pregnant, as it were, with the wisdom she will receive from him. He will present himself to her, just as he did to us, as a staff of power, as the image and likeness of God the Father, which is what is signified by the ring, and as the most beautiful among the sons of men, for this, I believe, is the meaning of the signet-cord. In fact every item used as an ornament may be interpreted spiritually as a symbol of beauty. And he will also send her a goat; that is, he will freely grant forgiveness of her sinful deeds. For according to the law a goat was slain as a sin offering and is a figure of the forgiveness of transgressions.

So Tamar was saved, even though death fell to her lot and she

112. Hos 2.2 (2.4 LXX).

113. Or "in spirit."

was subject to the ultimate penalty, for Tamar was condemned as one who had played the harlot. Nevertheless she was saved, because she showed the staff, the ring, and the signet-cord. Further, she openly admitted that she had become pregnant through Judah, that she might produce his offspring.¹¹⁴ Christ likewise will one day deliver the Jewish synagogue from the punishment that is due, when she brings the tokens of communion to him, showing clearly that she has conceived what is from him. For thus those who have sought to be approved through faith in Christ declare in a certain place, "Out of fear for you, O Lord, we have conceived and been in labor; we have brought forth the breath of your salvation, which we have produced upon the earth."¹¹⁵

Then the time came to give birth, and Tamar was in labor with twin babies. The firstborn put out his hand, but then drew it back in again, though it already had the scarlet thread attached to it. The second then came out first, having broken through the breach, as it were. Then the first child came out last. Now this is a clear indication to us that the Gentiles would be called before those of the race of Israel, and that those coming in the end times would be honored with the glory of the firstborn. There can be no doubt that the one which has received the sacrifice of God will also follow on later, for the scarlet thread is a figure of the sacred blood.

Who, then, is it that has made a breach through the dividing wall,¹¹⁶ and who called the second in place of the firstborn, putting the first last? Evidently it is Christ, through whom and with whom be glory to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit,¹¹⁷ for ever and ever. Amen.

More Concerning Joseph

The intervening account about Judah and Tamar having reached a suitable end, we must now come to the rest of the

¹¹⁴. Lit. "fruit."

¹¹⁵. Is 26.18.

¹¹⁶. Cf. Eph 2.14.

¹¹⁷. Var. "be glory with his Father, who is without beginning, and together with the all-holy Spirit of life."

matters concerning Joseph, some of which we have already mentioned.

When the divine Joseph was thrown into the pit by his brothers, we have taken him to be a figurative representation of Christ [321]. This was also the case when he was brought up from the pit and sold to the Ishmaelites, merchants of fragrant spices, distributing them to those who did not have them. And we previously said that by these merchants Joseph was brought into Egypt.¹¹⁸ For the Only-Begotten condescended to empty himself, becoming like one of us, and was called a brother to those upon the earth. In the presence of the rest of the people of Israel he suffered death, endured the cross, and descended into Hades, of which the pit was a figure. Yet he came back to life again, and was separated from those of the race of Israel. He was given, as it were, to the merchants of spiritual spices, that is, to the holy apostles. These went into the lands of the Gentiles, spreading the fragrance of his myrrh, conveying through the proclamation of the gospel to those who did not know him the form of servanthood that he took upon himself. For he is preached as having become flesh on our account, and as having come in the form of a servant.¹¹⁹ This, I believe, is the significance of Joseph being brought by the Ishmaelites into Egypt. Now what sufferings befell him there and what he had to do as a result, let us investigate, if it so please.

Joseph, still being young and in his adolescence, overcame the wantonness of the Egyptian woman, though he was forcefully incited to desire to commit an unlawful act. For she shamelessly took hold of his garments and he was not a little pressured to engage in an unacceptable sin. But he abandoned his garment and escaped her wild lustfulness, being unconquered by passion. Afterwards he was falsely accused when the woman brought charges against him, yet in these shameful accusations he was both temperate and longsuffering. All the same, it says that he was put in prison.

Christ, too, was among the Gentiles, I mean in the persons of

118. Var. add "Then, when we were interpreting this, we taught that the following is the case."

119. Cf. Phil 2:7.

the holy apostles, who said that they bore his scars in their own bodies.¹²⁰ They refused to be conformed to the things of which the world is mindful, but distanced themselves from fleshly lusts. For such always is the life of the saints. Yet for this reason they were plotted against and falsely accused by those in the habit of deeming burdensome those wishing to live in Christ, and they met with severe testing and imprisonment. They remembered, however, what Christ said: "If you were of the world, the world would love its own. But since you are not of the world, for this reason the world hates you."¹²¹ It was in this same way that the lustful woman did not care about Joseph.

When, however, the troubles increased, their effect was softened by the grace of God, making them more reasonable to bear, for, as it says,¹²² the jailer was greatly pleased with Joseph.¹²³ When Pharaoh's eunuchs, namely the cupbearer and the baker, were imprisoned, he explained their dreams. And for this reason, it says, the divine Joseph was the cause of considerable wonder. Then Pharaoh himself also dreamed that in the not-too-distant future there would be a time of fruitfulness and a hard time of famine, which was first seen as cows that were fat and strong, and later as ears of corn. [324] The wise men of Egypt had nothing to say, as they were completely without the knowledge required to be able to explain what was revealed through the dreams. It was testified of Joseph, however, that he was such a one who could do this, and so he came and gave the interpretation. Then Pharaoh too was amazed, and appointed him chamberlain and governor over his dominion.

Now Christ suffered persecution, as it were, in the persons of the holy apostles, as I just said. Yet when these men of whom we speak were undergoing such troubles, they were like those given great wisdom and the ability to explain matters beyond words. They were shown to be among those having dominion in the world, and those having authority over the earth. They also

120. Cf. Gal 6.17.

121. Jn 15.19.

122. Cyril actually wrote "as I said," although he has not mentioned this detail before.

123. Cf. Gn 39.21.

believed that they had knowledge of future events through the revelation of God by the Spirit. They agreed to become stewards and rulers of the Gentiles, and to disseminate teachings in the time of famine, teachings which concern life incorruptible, that is, the divine and heavenly word, and they gave the instruction that leads to everything most noble. These men also took possession, or rather Christ did through them, of the lands of the Gentiles for God the Father, just as Joseph in fact did for Pharaoh with the land of Egypt.

Furthermore, two sons were born to Joseph, namely Manasseh and Ephraim, whose mother was Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera the priest. Manasseh means “forgetting” the bad things that had happened, while Ephraim means a “growing” or a “producing” that leads to something better.¹²⁴ They were the offspring, so to speak, of a sacred mother, namely the church. Also, those called out from the Gentiles are, through faith in Christ, counted among the sons of God, who likewise will be caused to forget their troubles. “For their former affliction will be forgotten,” it says, “and it will not come into their mind. Everlasting praise will be upon their heads, and gladness and joy will overtake them; pain, sorrow, and groaning will flee away.”¹²⁵ Therefore, they will in due course arrive at that time when their evils will be forgotten. They will also come to grow, hastening to the sweet goal of their hope. For they will be translated from earthly things into the heavenly, passing from temporal things to those that transcend time, from corruption to incorruption, from shame to glory, from weakness to strength.

As the famine was harsh and protracted, the sons of Jacob went down to Egypt to buy food. In the brief account that is presented at this point, Joseph was in effect playing with them, for he claimed that it was not at all for grain that they had come into that land, but rather to act as spies. So he did not permit them to leave the land of Egypt without obligation, but he demanded that they should bring down Benjamin, his younger

124. Cyril here is not far off the mark in both instances. The Hebrew name Manasseh resembles the verb form for “causing to forget,” while Ephraim relates to the word for “fruitful.”

125. Is 65.16; cf. 51.11.

brother, something which their father scarcely allowed them to do. When they came with the boy, Joseph summoned the family, who washed in water and had their fill of bread and wine.

So too the Jews, having been so afflicted and oppressed by an unbearable famine, a spiritual one that is, will eventually forsake their haughtiness and arrogance, and they will come to Christ, desiring to be fed by him [325] with holy and spiritual food that gives life. Yet he will not receive them unless they are accompanied by the new¹²⁶ people of God, of which Benjamin was a type. But when they come with one soul and in one accord, as it were, he will happily receive them and bring them into his own household, which is the church. Then he will wash them in pure water, in the washing of regeneration, and will feed them upon bread and wine, which spiritually signify God's word.

Besides this, we also note that when the brothers came with Benjamin and were honored at his table, as I just stated, Joseph was recognized by them. Yet he allotted them no portion of land, but ordered them to hurry back and bring his father Jacob down to him. After he had come down and Joseph now saw him there together with his children, then he assigned to them the best of all the land. This is a clear indication that Christ will receive the people of Israel when they turn to him in the last times of the world. Then they will evidently be joined, as being of one soul, with the new people of God. This latter, as I said, is signified by Benjamin. Further, the allotted portion that we hope for will not be given to us separately from the holy fathers.¹²⁷ For although they died in faith, as the wise Paul said, "they did not receive what was promised, because God had provided something better for us so that they would not be made perfect without us."¹²⁸ Thus we wait for the fathers, so that we will not be made perfect without them. Then, together with the holy fathers, we—the first, middle, and last people of God together—will receive the most excellent and inalienable inheritance of the kingdom of heaven in Christ, through whom and

126. The adjective "new" may also be translated "young."

127. That is, the patriarchs of Israel.

128. Heb 11:39-40.

with whom be glory to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever. Amen.

*Concerning Joseph and his sons,
Ephraim and Manasseh*

1. It is indeed the case that, “Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.”¹²⁹ I mean that there is no good thing so noble or excellent that we do not gain through Christ. For he has become, it says, “mediator between God and men,”¹³⁰ and “through him we have access in one Spirit to God the Father in heaven.”¹³¹ Accordingly, he also said, “No one comes to the Father, except through me.”¹³² In him and through him is the whole fullness of grace and a marvelous inheritance. For although as God he was rich, for our sakes he became poor, in order that by his poverty we might become rich,¹³³ and so ascending to the same degree of glory as the holy fathers, we shall be able to share in that most attractive hope that they had.

Consider, then, the true account of these matters, and let the eyes of your mind enter into the sacred Scriptures. Here it reads as follows: *It happened after these things that Joseph was told his father was ill. So taking his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, he went to Jacob. [328]¹³⁴ When Jacob was told, ‘Behold, your son Joseph has come to you,’ Israel summoned his strength and sat up in bed. Jacob said to Joseph, ‘My God appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan. He blessed me, and said to me, ‘Behold, I will increase you and multiply you, and I will make you a multitude of nations. I will give this land to you and to your offspring after you as an everlasting possession.’ Now then, your two sons who were born to you in Egypt, before I came to you in Egypt, are mine. Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, just as Reuben and Simeon are mine. The offspring born to you after them*

129. Jas 1.17.

130. 1 Tm 2.5.

131. Cf. Eph 2.18.

132. Jn 14.6.

133. Cf. 2 Cor 8.9.

134. The numbering in the Migne text omits 326 and 327, although text is not missing.

will be yours; they will be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance. As for me, when I came back from Mesopotamia of Syria, Rachel your mother died in the land of Canaan as I was nearing the highway¹³⁵ of Chabrattha on the way to Ephratha. And I buried her by the highway, in Bethlehem.”¹³⁶

The blessed Jacob reached a good old age, as it is written. As he was removed from everyday human concerns, he had it in mind to bless the sons of Joseph who were born to a foreign mother, Asenath the daughter of Potiphra the priest. His intention was that none of the people of Israel should despise them, deeming them to be of a strange and foreign race. With much wisdom and prudence the divine Jacob sought to teach Joseph himself and the other sons that, in keeping with the divine decree, all those born from them should be considered as belonging to their own family. For he said, “*God appeared to me in the land of Canaan and expressly promised that I would be the father of very many peoples, and that I would be enlarged to become nations and multitudes of nations.*” So by this means he both persuades them to honor God with judgments that accord with the truth, and teaches that next of kin should be counted as belonging to the same family, even though they might have been born from a foreign mother.

2. These things we have stated briefly, drawing them out of the earthy literalness of the text. So it is also the case that we who have been justified by faith in Christ are sons of God, belonging to the household of the saints. In this, Christ acts as our mediator, and it is through him that we are united both to him and to the Father, and also to the assembly¹³⁷ of the saints. This is actually how it was with respect to Joseph, who was like one set in the middle, when he made Ephraim and Manasseh the sons of his own father, and so they too were entered in the register¹³⁸ of the patriarchs. For it says, “*Now your two sons who were*

135. Cyril retains the LXX term *hippodromos*, denoting a racecourse or a roadway for horses. There is nothing in the Hebrew text corresponding to this.

136. Gn 48.1–7.

137. Lit. “choirs.”

138. *katalogos*, “list,” “enrollment.”

born to you in Egypt are mine. Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, just as Reuben and Simeon are mine." That is to say, they would be among the firstborn sons, and also be placed with those who render obedience, for Reuben was the firstborn, and Simeon means "obedience."

Through faith we who are last have become the first, and the people taken from among the Gentiles have inherited the glory of the firstborn. They have been honored on account of their obedience and willing service. For Christ himself has testified concerning them, saying, "A people I did not know served me; as soon as they heard, they obeyed me."¹³⁹ For though we have come from a mother of a different race [329] in that the church has been called out of the nations, yet Emmanuel is well able to act as intermediary, and through himself to unite us to God the Father. He assigns to us the inheritance of the saints, bringing upon us a fitting glory, and declaring us to be a holy race.

Consider how, out of love for him, Jacob placed the blessed Joseph's sons among his own. Now we too have become beloved in Christ, and since through him we have been brought forth by a spiritual birth, we have become precious to the Father, as I just said, and placed alongside the saints who went before us. If we are called sons of God the Father, we will be under the care of the one who brought us and united us to him, who is Christ. See how the blessed Jacob incorporated Ephraim and Manasseh among his own children. Yet he says, "*the offspring which are born to you after them will be yours.*"¹⁴⁰ So you understand that even though we are called sons of God the Father, we shall no less belong to Christ. And this, I believe, is the very thing he is talking about when he says to the Father, "Those you have given me out of the world, they were yours, and you gave them to me, and I have been glorified in them."¹⁴¹

Jacob said that he buried Rachel in Bethlehem. We have mentioned several times that Rachel serves as a picture and

139. Ps 18.43-44 (17.44-45 LXX).

140. The words "after them" were omitted by Cyril, but as they are found in both MT and LXX (of Gn 48.6) they have been included here.

141. Jn 17.6, 10.

a type of the Gentile church. Now we would not, in my opinion, be speaking falsely if we wished to say that the church has passed into another manner of life, one that is evidently better and more beneficial than this worldly life. For the church has died to the world since she is no more mindful of the things of the world, but spiritually she is alive to God in Christ through her conduct that is in accord with the gospel. For while she is in the world on account of her life in the flesh, it is as though she is hidden, not possessing any splendor in the world. She has in effect been buried with Christ. This, I believe, is what the most-wise Paul meant when he said to us, "For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God."¹⁴² Understand that when Rachel was buried in Bethlehem, and was no longer seen, it was as though Emmanuel himself was hidden with her, for he was later to be born through the holy Virgin. Let us, then, commend such a death of the church which brings forth the principles of a holy life, a life that is in Christ.

The foregoing is, I believe, something necessary to speak of further. When the father received Joseph's sons as his own children after their mother had died, he also gave instructions about her. He indicated the plot of land in which she had been buried so that, being sure it was not in some other place, Joseph should give her the proper attention that was her due. So too God the Father instructed the Son concerning the church, and assured him that, though she had been overcome by death on account of the ancient curse, she was worthy of care and attention. The divine David therefore cried out to God the Father in heaven for us, "Command, O God, your power; strengthen, O God, what you have wrought among us."¹⁴³ He was in effect indicating the body overcome by death so that through the power of God the Father, that is, through the Son, it might be delivered from corruption and be restored again to its original condition, namely to the blessed and incorruptible life in Christ. [332]

3. Israel, being the firstborn and therefore honored with privileges befitting its seniority, fell away from the glory it then had, and the grace of such a splendid glory passed on to the

¹⁴². Col 3.3.

¹⁴³. Ps 68.28 (67.29 LXX).

new people of God coming from the Gentiles. Then we, in our turn, will be in no way inferior. For it says, *When Israel saw the sons of Joseph, he asked, "Who are these?"*¹⁴⁴ *Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons whom God has given to me here." Jacob said, "Bring them to me that I may bless them." Now his eyes were failing with old age, and he was hardly able to see. So Joseph brought them near to him, and he kissed them and embraced them. Israel said to Joseph, "Behold, I have not been deprived of seeing your face, and God has even shown me your offspring too." Then Joseph took them off his knees, and they bowed down to Israel with their faces to the ground. Taking his sons, Joseph set Ephraim on the right, to Israel's left, and he set Manasseh on the left, to Israel's right; and so he brought them near to him. Israel then stretched out his right hand and placed it upon the head of Ephraim, the younger one, and placed his left upon the head of Manasseh, thus crossing his hands. He blessed them and said, "May the God before whom my fathers, Abraham and Isaac, were well-pleasing, the God who has sustained me from my youth until today, the angel who has delivered me from all evils, bless these children."*¹⁴⁵

So the boys were presented, and the old man inquired whose they were. To this Joseph replied, "My *two sons*." Then, when they were brought near, he honored them with kisses and embraces. You see, then, how it is as though we who were unknown to God the Father have become known and brought near in Christ. He too welcomes us gladly, as the Son testifies of our relationship with him. He thus counts us worthy of his love, and invites us into union, which is a spiritual union, with himself. The kiss also is very plainly symbolic of love, and the embrace of receiving into union. So likewise the most-wise Paul writes to those who believe in Christ, saying, "Now you who were once far off have been brought near,"¹⁴⁶ that is, brought by Christ.¹⁴⁷ And again he says, "Now that you have come to know God, or rather be known by him."¹⁴⁸ For God the Father counts worthy of his attention and recognizes only those who have a spiritual

144. Lit. "Who are these to you?" (LXX).

145. Gn 48.8–16.

146. Eph 2.13.

147. Var. "the Son."

148. Gal 4.9.

relationship with the Son, who by him¹⁴⁹ have been born again through the Spirit, and who have been richly blessed through him. This is, in actual fact, similar to the way in which God recognized those in Egypt who were anointed with the blood of the lamb, when he said, "I will see the blood and I will protect you, and there will be no plague among you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt."¹⁵⁰

Now Jacob was extremely pleased at seeing his son Joseph. *He said, "Behold, I have not been deprived of seeing your face, and [333] God has even shown me your offspring too."* So it was that when Christ came to the Jews, the Father was deprived of his Son. For they encompassed him with death, supposing that he would be held down by the gates of Hades, and that he would lie down dead with the rest. But the Author of life did not allow himself to be overcome by death. He therefore came back to life, and the Father saw him again, and also the generation that was born from him and in him, meaning those who believe, the holy nation, the royal priesthood, the people belonging to God.¹⁵¹ It is over these that Christ himself also rejoices when he says, "Here I am, and the children God has given me."¹⁵²

Joseph brought the sons to his father and they bowed down. Then Manasseh, the firstborn, stood on the right, and Ephraim, the younger one, stood on the left. But when Jacob placed his hands upon them, he crossed them. He honored Ephraim by placing his right hand upon him, and it was as if he was then treating Manasseh as of secondary importance by placing his left hand on him. Thus he commenced his blessing for them. We likewise have been received as the first among those who worship,¹⁵³ and as the people of God coming after those others, though it was neither Moses nor the prophets who brought us near (for the law lacks the ability to bring one to salvation), but the Son himself, for through him we have obtained access,¹⁵⁴ as

149. Or "at his direction."

150. Ex 12.13.

151. Cf. 1 Pt 2.9.

152. Is 8.18; Heb 2.13.

153. The Greek term "worship" here is related to the verb "bow down" at the beginning of the paragraph.

154. Cf. Rom 5.2.

I said. His aim was in fact to give the flock of those gathered out of the nations priority over Israel. For although Joseph placed Manasseh at the right hand of his father, since they acted toward him profanely beyond measure, the Father gave greater honor to those who came second in time, that is, the Gentiles. So the last were first, and the first last.

Jacob blessed the boys, speaking of the God who sustained him and the angel who delivered him, here completely uniting God the Father and the Son, who through the mouth of the prophets is described as "the Angel of great counsel."¹⁵⁵ Accordingly, all grace and every manner of blessing and provision comes to us in no other way except from the Father through the Son. And so the divine Paul says, "Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."¹⁵⁶

The divine Joseph was troubled when he saw that the first-born had been placed, as it were, after the younger. Then his father explained the import of this mystery, *and he said, "He also will become a people and be exalted, but his younger brother will be greater than he, and his offspring will become a multitude of nations,"*¹⁵⁷ and then after other things it says, *he put Ephraim before Manasseh.*¹⁵⁸ Yet, inasmuch as it seemed good to Christ, Israel did not miss out on its own glory. And so Christ plainly stated, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."¹⁵⁹ Since, however, Israel was hardened, as is written,¹⁶⁰ and ill-treated him who extended the offer of salvation, continuing in a state of disobedience, it was placed at the left hand, the place of lesser glory. Israel itself is indeed blessed and exalted, in the portion of those who have been saved. This is the remnant, in accordance with [336] what the prophet says.¹⁶¹ But the church taken from among the Gentiles is so much more privileged. It has been enlarged so as to become a multitude of peoples, and it is greater than Israel as it exceeds in having an immeasurably

155. Isa 9.6 (9.5 LXX). The Hebrew here lacks the term "angel."

156. Rom 1.7; 1 Cor 1.3; 2 Cor 1.2; etc.

157. Gn 48.19.

158. Gn 48.20.

159. Mt 15.24.


160. Cf. Rom 11.7, 25.

161. Cf. Is 10.22.

more numerous multitude of believers. Yet both those of Israel and those of the Gentiles have been crowned with one and the same grace for sanctification, that is, we who believe and have been justified in Christ, through whom and with whom be glory to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

BOOK SEVEN: GENESIS 49

Concerning the blessing of the twelve patriarchs

HE AIM OF THIS present discourse is to explain each of the things spoken by Jacob the forefather about what would later happen to the sons who were born to him. But we first bear witness to the obvious fact that the interpretation of what is said is altogether difficult. The meaning is inaccessible to many,¹ as it is revealed obscurely in figures. The blessing is expressed through diverse manners of speech,² though were this not so, it would be even harder to understand. For here the divine Jacob declares to his sons predictions of things pertaining to later times. Yet he makes mention, in addition, of past events and enumerates the misconduct, firstly of Reuben, then immediately after this, of Simeon and Levi. Who, then, would be so bold as to say in what manner the blessing and the remembrance of former sins should be expressed, and would not be thought a speaker of error and one who has drifted away from the proper interpretation? So the discourse concerning these matters is profound and is not readily accessible to those who wish to comprehend it.

What can we say, then, is an admissible yardstick for us to lay down in these matters of contemplation set before us, but that of the Jewish synagogue?³ In sum, it is speaking of the whole race of the Jews; that is to say, each tribe is a type of what they would be like in the future—being condemned over some matters, while perhaps approved in certain others—and how things would turn

1. Or “in many respects.”

2. Or “in a mixed manner.”

3. The translation incorporates at this point an addition from the Harleian manuscript, which seems to be required to give the complete sense.

out for them in the end. It is such things, no doubt, that the recounting of this prophecy will in some way convey to us.

Note how the description of events that would take place in later times arises out of things that had already happened. Also note the interpretation of names, that is to say, their meaning. These, after a certain fashion, speak of the things that would come to pass and give a distinct portrayal of them in advance.

Now this is what is written here: *Jacob called his sons and said, "Assemble yourselves that I may tell you what will happen to you in the latter days. Gather together and listen, O sons of Jacob, listen to Israel your father."*⁴

Concerning Reuben

*"Reuben, you are my firstborn, you are my strength and [337] the first of my children, hard to endure and unbearably self-willed. You were as unruly as water—do not overflow! For you went up to your father's bed, then you defiled the couch to which you went up."*⁵

Reuben did indeed violate his father's marriage. He did things that were not lawful and was evidently found out. The matter was condemned as evil by Jacob, for it says, "it appeared evil in the sight of Jacob."⁶ I do not, however, to any degree suppose that an event that is already past should happen in the last times. To consider such a thing would be utterly foolish. But if we transform, as it were, the figure of the transgression into one that corresponds to it, we will then see the sin of God's first-born people, Israel.

When God brought the synagogue⁷ out of Egypt, it was as though he were taking a young woman to himself through a spiritual union according to the law. He accepted her into his presence, deeming her worthy of a close relationship, and thus he made her a fertile mother of children. In this the all-wise Moses was in effect acting as the one who brings the bride to her husband, with the angels mediating in the formation of

4. Gn 49.1–2.

5. Gn 49.3–4.

6. Gn 35.22.

7. Or "congregation," here a collective term for the Jews.

the union. Yet the synagogue that was brought into this union by God repudiated the law that established the legitimate relationship. It was, in a way, as if she lay with the sons of the one who had married her and played the harlot with them. She no longer bore offspring for the one she was joined to through the law, but her inclination was rather to produce offspring by conceiving with others, by which I mean spiritual conception through instruction. Disdaining the fact that she had been set before God, as though it were something of no consequence, she turned to the commandments and teachings of men. She paid no heed to heavenly instruction, having a merely superficial regard for the law.

For this reason the prophet Isaiah said, "How the faithful city of Zion, once full of justice, has become a harlot! Righteousness once lodged in her, but now murderers! Your silver is worthless. Your wine peddlers mix the wine with water."⁸ For righteousness, that is, God, did indeed lodge and abide in her. But she took in murderers, adulterers, and the corrupt, who gave her worthless silver, and who mixed the wine with water. The word of those who persuaded her to respect the teachings and commandments of men was truly worthless. The doctrine of those men was peddled, as it were, mixed with inferior teaching. This, I believe, is the meaning of the wine mixed with water.

That this matter grieved the God of all, who brought a just accusation against Jerusalem as one who had played the harlot, we plainly learn when he says through Jeremiah, "Lift your eyes to look straight ahead, and see where you have become mingled. You sat for them by the wayside like a desolate crow, and you defiled the land with your harlotry."⁹ You had many shepherds¹⁰ who were a cause of stumbling for you. You had the face of a harlot, acting shamelessly towards all. You did not call me your companion, your father, and the one who guided you in the time of your virginity."¹¹ He also says, "If a man divorces his wife, and she departs from him and becomes another man's,

8. Is 1.21–22.

9. Var. add "and with your wickedness," as found in the LXX.

10. See n. 12 below.

11. Jer 3.2–4.

will she indeed return to him again? Will not that woman be utterly defiled? [340] But you have played the harlot with many shepherds,¹² and would you return to me? says the Lord.”¹³

The Savior himself also clearly showed us their harlotrous manner. For the Pharisees, men without understanding who were always finding fault, came to him, saying, “Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat food.”¹⁴ Christ said to them, “Why do you transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? For God said, ‘Honor your father and your mother in order that it might go well with you.’ But you say, ‘Whoever says to his father or mother, “Whatever profit you would have received from me is *korban*,” then he need not honor his father or his mother.’ And so you have nullified the commandment of God by means of your tradition.”¹⁵ Note how it can readily be seen that, being under the direction of other instructors, they chose to observe and perform other things beyond what was given in the law. So the synagogue of the Jews played the harlot. The pure and spotless virgin, however, who was freed from every stain and wrinkle, that is to say, the church, engages to maintain the noble and most excellent form of union with Christ, saying, “My kinsman is mine, and I am his.”¹⁶

Let us, then, maintain that Jacob’s concubine Bilhah, whom Reuben, representing the people who were the firstborn, defiled, is a picture of the Jewish synagogue. This is especially seen to be the case as the meaning of Bilhah is “grown old” and that of Reuben is “son of defilement.”¹⁷ For when the synagogue of the Jews became old and wrinkled, there arose that new peo-

12. The translators of the LXX have misread a Hebrew term (*rēʿīm*) meaning “friends,” “companions.” The same seems to apply to the foregoing Jeremiah citation, though in that particular clause the LXX differs widely from the Hebrew.

13. Jer 3.1.

14. Mt 15.2.

15. Mt 15.3–6; cf. Mk 7.11.

16. Song 2.16.

17. The name Bilhah may indeed be associated with the Hebrew verb for “grow old,” “wear out,” yet Reuben clearly means “see, a son.”

ple of God, those who are so through faith. David rejoiced over this in the Psalms, singing, "The people yet to be created will praise the Lord."¹⁸ For, according to the Scriptures, everything in Christ is a new creation.¹⁹

Yet Israel was deemed filthy and defiled, having rejected the cleansing offered through Christ. And why do I say this? Because they even laid their hands upon him who spoke to them of cleansing. Accordingly, it was once said through the mouth of the holy prophets, "If the Ethiopian could change his skin, or the leopard its spots, then you who have learned evil would be able to do good."²⁰ Again, to Jerusalem represented as a woman, it says, "Though you wash with lye, and use much soap on yourself, you will still be stained before me by your iniquities, says the Lord."²¹

Now Jacob said of Reuben, "*You are my firstborn, you are my strength and the first of my children.*" To that firstborn people who were brought out of Egypt great strength was displayed by God. For the land of Egypt was punished in many different and wondrous ways—through the waters being turned into blood, swarms of gnats, frogs coming up on the land, the fall of hail, and the death of the firstborn, and besides this the redeemed passed through the sea as though on dry land.

Reuben, then, was called the "strength" of God.²² Yet he conducted himself harshly [341], and was hardened in stubbornness; that is to say, he was obstinate and rigid, wild and impetuous. Corresponding to this, the Jews were hostile to the truth and unrestrained. Therefore, they were justly told, "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit."²³ And Christ himself said in a certain place, "Which of the prophets did your fathers not kill?"²⁴ and "Fill up the measure of your fathers."²⁵

18. Ps 102.18 (101.19 LXX).

19. 2 Cor 5.17.

20. Jer 13.23.

21. Jer 2.22.

22. Var. "received the strength of God as his portion."

23. Acts 7.51.

24. Cf. Acts 7.52, where similar words are attributed to Stephen.

25. Mt 23.32.

Israel was also impulsive and quick to anger, having an extreme impetuosity, being "*as unruly as water*," that is to say, borne by an unrestrained recklessness in whatever they wished. This is what the rushing of water is like. Yet it says, "*Do not overflow*." And what does this mean? When water boils over, it flows away somewhere, as when it overflows from a boiling pot, and there somehow seems to be a great deal of it. So having conferred upon him the nature of flowing water, it continues the metaphor and says, "*Do not overflow*," which means, "Do not increase in quantity or become many." For those of the race of Israel who have been saved through faith in Christ are few in number compared to the multitude of those saved from among the Greeks.

Then Jacob gives the reason why this would happen, and says, "*For you went up to your father's bed, then you defiled the couch to which you went up*." For as I said before, the Jews no longer sought out the things contained in the law and the heavenly oracles, but they rather devoted themselves to the words of adulterers²⁶ and to the teachings of men, and so completely strayed from the knowledge of Christ. For this reason he himself said, "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life, and it is they that testify of me. Yet you do not wish to come to me that you may have life,"²⁷ and again, "If you believed Moses, you would believe in me, for he wrote about me."²⁸ He also brought serious charges against the teachers of the Jews, saying, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut up the kingdom of heaven from before men. You yourselves do not enter, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in."²⁹ Again he said, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you cross over sea and dry land to make a single proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves."³⁰ But this person

26. This clause has been added from the Harleian Codex as the sense is confused without it.

27. Jn 5.39-40.

28. Jn 5.46.

29. Mt 23.13.

30. Mt 23.15.

would not have become a son of hell if he had not consented to the words of those adulterers. So then, those of the race of Israel went up to their father's bed. Rejecting the will of the Law-giver as being irrelevant, they forced their own words into their disciples, and so the seeds of impurity entered into them.

Concerning Simeon and Levi

1. *"Simeon and Levi are brothers; in their seditiousness they carried out wrongful acts.³¹ Let not my soul come into their counsel, let not my heart be joined to their conspiracy. For in their wrath they killed men, and in their passion they hamstrung a bull. Cursed be their wrath, because it was willful, and their anger, because it was cruel. I will disperse them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel."*³²

When Jerusalem played the harlot, and gave her mind over to the godless deceits of strange teaching [344], the God of all was justifiably severe. He said very plainly through the mouth of Isaiah, "This people honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."³³

Since profane Jerusalem was going recklessly astray and behaving as one in a drunken frenzy, so to speak, God the Father determined to train her up in a better way. He sent his own Son from heaven, who became one of us, that is, a human being, so that while the multitude of holy prophets were ineffective in numerous respects (for they said, "Lord, who has believed our report?"),³⁴ the Jews might at least have regard for the Son himself when he came. They, however, descended into such foolishness that they even thought it possible to take possession of the Lord's inheritance. Having killed the saints, they went to even greater lengths of impiety and also mistreated the Son himself in a way that was inconceivable, for they said among themselves, "This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and take possession of

31. Or "they carried out an unjust course of action."

32. Gn 49.5-7. The Harleian Codex omits the final sentence of the citation.

33. Mt 15.9.

34. Is 53.1.

his inheritance.”³⁵ Yet their folly was not limited to these things, but to their actions against the holy prophets they added their treatment of the holy apostles, whose blood they did not spare.

An approach such as this to the prophecy set before us produces its interpretation. So it was indeed appropriate that the divine Jacob should mention again the deeds done among the Shechemites. In this way the import of that righteous man’s words is found to be in accordance with the truth. How should one here take what had already occurred as an indication of what would later happen? Well, through what had happened in Shechem it is referring to the same manner of sin that would be enacted against Christ, just as was in fact the case also in the matters relating to Reuben the firstborn.

What, then, did Simeon and Levi do in Shechem? When their sister Dinah had gone out from the tent of their father, and was taking a look at the daughters of the local inhabitants, Shechem son of Hamor forcibly raped her, so deflowering her. At this, Simeon and Levi were greatly displeased and plotted murder through deception. First they persuaded the local men to receive the patriarchal rite of circumcision, so that, if they chose to do this, they would instantly become a kindred people. Yet having done this, they then killed them without warning. They thought they could avail themselves of an excuse for their actions by saying, “Should they have treated our sister like a harlot?”³⁶

2. So one must now go on to present an appropriate explanation of the spiritual sense,³⁷ which we will do as we are able, bringing together all those various elements that contribute towards the interpretation. Let us then broaden our study concerning Jacob and describe the way in which he lived, which women he married, and how he is shown to be the father of so many children.

We said that Jacob took to himself Leah, the eldest of Laban’s daughters, and not long after that the younger Rachel as a second wife. We have also established that Leah is a type of

35. Mt 21.38.

36. Gn 34.31.

37. *theôrēma*, denoting the sense derived from spiritual contemplation.

the synagogue of the Jews, and Rachel a type of the church of the Gentiles. Then Leah was interpreted as meaning “weary,” and she did indeed have eyes that were extremely weak and unappealing [345]. So the Jewish synagogue became exceedingly weary, being burdened with the law given through Moses, and not seeing the mystery of our Savior with good eyes. “But Rachel was fine-looking with an extremely beautiful face.”³⁸ So too the Gentile church was most attractive.

Now Dinah was the daughter of Leah that was born last. And she herself was also a type of the assembly of the circumcised, those who were born in later times when the Only-Begotten took on human nature among them. This latter assembly of the circumcised went out a short way from the father’s tent, that is, from the customs pertaining to the law, and fell in with the local people, which is to say, she had dealings³⁹ with the holy apostles, through their teaching, and no longer lived according to Jewish customs, but assumed the customs of other nations. When this happened, she was in a spiritual manner deflowered, receiving from the apostles the seed of the gospel teachings and lifestyle which are in Christ.

Certain of the sons of Jacob, however, namely Simeon and Levi, became indignant at this. These were those who were classed as the obedient, and with them the kind that were consecrated and chosen, for Simeon means “obedience,” and Levi “accepted” or “chosen.”⁴⁰ How can it be doubted that it was those having received the honor of the priesthood under the law who fiercely attacked the holy apostles (though the people also went along with them)? They gnashed their teeth at them, calling their conversion of others destructive, and brought against them many such extraordinary accusations. “For behold,” they said, “you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching.”⁴¹ But when they had reproached them for no longer living according to

38. Gn 29.17.

39. The term used here (*epemisgeto*) has strong connotations of sexual intercourse.

40. While the name Simeon may be related to the idea of obedience, Levi in Hebrew is understood to mean “joined” (cf. Gn 29.34).

41. Acts 5.28.

Jewish customs, they discovered that circumcision was esteemed by them. Yet this did not distinguish them in any way at all from the Gentiles, since they chose to interpret the customs of Moses according to their proper sense. For it says, "He is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. Rather, he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, by the Spirit, and not by the letter."⁴² Note how those of the Gentiles who are of good repute have conformed to the customs of the Jews by receiving circumcision by the Spirit, so bearing Jewishness inwardly.

The Jews, however, had also earlier killed the prophets, and even Emmanuel himself. That is why it says, "*in their seditiousness Simeon and Levi carried out wrongful acts.*" For Simeon and Levi, that is, both people and priests, were in agreement and conspired together to commit wrongful acts against the saints. So "*in their seditiousness*" here stands for their conspiracy and determination. For those terrible things that befell the saints did not simply happen spontaneously, neither were the outrageous and extraordinarily audacious deeds of the Jews without prior planning, but it was through their counsel to take action that these things which surpassed all evil came to be done.

Therefore, the divine Jacob rejected such conspiracy, base counsel, and plotting, for he said, "*Let not my soul come into their counsel, let not my heart be joined to their conspiracy.*" It is as though he were saying, "May I not look upon such counsels with the eyes of my mind, nor may I ever receive [348] such grievous schemes of the ungodly into my heart." Thus the prophet Isaiah also denounced the people of the Jews, saying, "Woe to their souls, because they have devised an evil counsel, saying to themselves, 'Let us bind the righteous one, for he is burdensome to us.'"⁴³ David, too, in the Psalms said, "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, and who does not stand in the way of sinners."⁴⁴ And again, "I hate the assembly of evildoers, and I will not sit with the ungodly."⁴⁵

42. Rom 2.28-29.

43. Is 3.9-10 LXX.

44. Ps 1.1.

45. Ps 26.5 (25.5 LXX).

So the divine Jacob rejects the scheming of the Jews and states his reason, saying, *"For in their wrath they killed men, and in their passion they hamstrung a bull."* For they did indeed kill the saints, as I stated, being directed by an unholy wrath to cruel and inhuman behavior. And when those wretches admitted into their hearts a wild and uncurbed desire, they hamstrung a bull, which is Christ. What their intention was, we have previously said. Recognizing that he was the heir, they desired to have his inheritance.

3. Note, too, the precise meaning of the words: *"For they killed men, and they hamstrung a bull."* For they encompassed the saints with death, and they remain dead awaiting the time of the resurrection. But like a calf that is hamstrung by an eagle, Christ in a way slumped to the ground, willingly enduring the death of his flesh. Yet he was not held down by death. Although he was dead as a human being, he remained alive in the nature of his Deity. So the bull, a creature that is especially strong, clean, and sacred, is Christ. The Son is the powerful Lord, who committed no sin, but rather offered himself up for us as a pleasing aroma to God the Father.

So now, let those give heed who have hamstrung such a noble bull. *"Cursed be their wrath, because it was willful, and their anger, because it was cruel."* What did they experience as a result? They were removed from their land and left their home country behind. They were scattered and, living everywhere as strangers and aliens, were fearful. For it is true to say that when a man is uprooted from his own place, he is like a bird when it is thrown out of its own nest.

I think it right to say further that for those who hamstrung the bull this matter will result in a curse, while for those who were troubled over this, and who denounced such a terrible crime, there will be redemption, cleansing, and the putting away of sin. We shall find that this very thing I have said is recorded, expressed through the shadows of the law. For in Deuteronomy it reads as follows: "If someone is found slain in the land which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, fallen in the field, and it is not known who struck him down, then your elders and your judges shall go out and measure the

distance to the towns around the slain man. And the elders of the town that is nearest to the body shall take a heifer from the herd, which has not labored [349] and which has not pulled with a yoke. The elders of that town shall bring the heifer down to a rough valley, which has not been cultivated nor sown, and they shall slaughter⁴⁶ the heifer there in the valley. Then the priests, the Levites, shall come, for the Lord your God has chosen them to stand before him, and to pronounce blessings in his name, and by their word every dispute and every assault⁴⁷ shall be settled. And all the elders of that town who come near to the slain man shall wash their hands over the head of the heifer that was slaughtered⁴⁸ in the valley. Then they shall answer and say, 'Our hands did not shed this blood, nor did our eyes see it happen. Be gracious, O Lord, to your people Israel, whom you redeemed from the land of Egypt, that innocent blood may not be laid upon your people Israel, and that atonement shall be provided on their behalf for the shed blood.' So you shall remove the guilt of innocent blood from your midst."⁴⁹

Though we make mention of this passage now, it will be discussed in detail at a later occasion. Yet you can see how, when we take the heifer as prefiguring Emmanuel, certain of those falling under the charge of shedding blood acquit themselves. For it was, I believe, necessary for them in acquitting themselves to say, "Our hands did not shed this blood." The people of the Jews, however, will not be found ever to have exclaimed these words. On the contrary, those who hamstringed the calf were bold enough to say, "Our hands shed this blood." For this, I consider, is nothing other than what they foolishly said with regard to Christ, "His blood be upon us and upon our children."⁵⁰

46. It is important to note that the precise meaning of the Greek verb is in fact "hamstring."

47. The Greek noun *aphê* literally means "touch." The Latin translator in Migne understood this as "leprosy." In this he departed from the Vg text, which took the reference to be to the determination of clean and unclean.

48. See n. 46 above.

49. Dt 21.1-9.

50. Mt 27.25.

Concerning Judah

"Judah, your brothers will praise you. Your hands will be upon the neck of your enemies. Your father's sons will bow down to you. Judah is a lion's whelp; from the sprouting plant,⁵¹ my son, you have gone up. You crouch down, lying like a lion, and as a whelp. Who will rouse him? A prince shall not be lacking from Judah, nor a ruler from his loins, until there come the things stored up for him; he is the expectation of the nations. He ties his foal to the vine, and his donkey's colt to its branch. He will wash his robe in wine, and his garment in the blood of grapes. His eyes will sparkle more than wine, and his teeth will be whiter than milk."⁵²

We see the manner of this blessing to be especially clear—how it expressly presents to the hearers the prediction of the economy of our Savior. At the beginning of the blessing the significance of the name is set forth, and also the preeminence in glory of the tribe of Judah over the others. If one wished to explain the name Judah, he might interpret it as "praise," or "hymn," or "praised with hymns."⁵³ And this has reference to Christ, who according to the flesh was from the tribe of Judah. The Virgin also, who was chosen for the birth of his flesh, came from Judah, Jesse, and David. The prophet, therefore, looking ahead to the one to come from [352] the tribe of Judah, says, "Your name is true, as your power over matters also shows. You shall be praised, and you shall bear the glory that is due to God."⁵⁴ For it is not fitting to ascribe glory to any other except to him alone who truly exists and is known as God. It is as if to say, "Even though you have come as a man, and have emptied yourself, you shall be renowned, revered, and celebrated. Those who were your brothers with respect to your human nature will not relate to you as to a man. Though they were made your brothers, they will laud you as Master, they will sing to you

51. Cyril here, as expected, follows the LXX, where the Hebrew reads "from the prey."

52. Gn 49.8–12.

53. The Hebrew name "Judah" is clearly related to the idea of praise (cf. Gn 29.35).

54. There is no identifiable biblical source for this citation.

as Maker. Although you were reckoned with them among creatures, they will recognize you, though veiled in the form of a servant, as King and Lord of all."

When Jacob says, "*Your hands will be upon the neck of your enemies*," he is foretelling that Emmanuel would exercise rule over all those who opposed him, overwhelming his enemies with ease. Christ himself, speaking through the mouth of David, foretold the same thing. He said, "I will pursue my enemies and seize them; I will not turn back until they are consumed. I will crush them, and they will not be able to stand. They will fall under my feet."⁵⁵ Jacob therefore says, "*His hands will be upon the neck of his enemies*," as hands of one pursuing rather than fleeing,⁵⁶ not as those of one being struck but of one striking. What is sung in the book of Psalms is true: "The enemy shall not have the advantage over him, and the son of iniquity shall no longer harm him."⁵⁷ If he grants us authority to tread upon snakes and scorpions and upon all the power of the enemy, are we not obliged to acknowledge that he himself first has under his authority those wishing to resist him and rise up against him in a profane manner? So then, he does not know what it means to flee, but only to pursue. He intends to exercise his rule over these enemies, and this without effort, for he has in fact conquered the world! The divine Jacob spoke of these things ahead of time, when he said, "*Your hands will be upon the neck of your enemies. Your father's sons will bow down to you.*"

How should we interpret the distinction between the "*brothers*" who praise him, and the "*father's sons*" who join with them in bowing down to him? Is it not necessary to say how they differ? Now the blessed Joseph, though he was not the actual father, is ascribed with being the father of Christ. Joseph had sons and daughters from his first marriage, who were also, one may suppose, members of the same family as Christ. These saw him performing signs, and saw how he was utterly unwilling to observe the regulations of the law with respect to the distinc-

55. Ps 18.37-38 (17.37-38 LXX).

56. The word here translated as "neck" is literally "back" in the LXX, which allows the idea of approach from behind.

57. Ps 88.23 LXX.

tion between foods, and that he did not choose to honor the Sabbath rest—for he said, “It is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a man,”⁵⁸ and that “the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”⁵⁹ In seeing these things, they were divided in their opinion about him. They neither wished to honor him completely, as he seemed to disagree with matters concerning the law, but neither did they want to let such a remarkable person remain unadmired. And so they came to him on one occasion and expressly said, “If you do these things, show yourself to the world. For no one does anything in secret while [353] he himself seeks to be known openly,”⁶⁰ to which the evangelist added, “For even his own brothers did not believe in him.”⁶¹ Nevertheless, though they said such things at first, they did believe later. For they were convinced that he was also in very nature God, and that he had become flesh and appeared as a man. This situation the blessed prophet Jeremiah foreknew in the Spirit and, addressing Emmanuel himself, said, “For even your brothers, and the house of your father, even these have rejected you, and they have cried out and gathered together in pursuit of you. Do not trust them, even though they speak fair words to you.”⁶² For those who once cried out against him together with others were brought together in faith, and they spoke fair things about him. Accordingly, the blessed James, when he wrote to the twelve tribes, said, “James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.”⁶³ So then, also those who through faith and sanctification have been called to become brothers will praise him as God, yet the father’s sons will not bow to him any the less. It is evident, then, that those who bow down to him shall praise him, and those who offer praise will in no way less bow down to him.

Christ, being the all-powerful Son of God, is “*a lion’s whelp*” from Judah, who can conquer without a fight, and who is able to strike down those who oppose him by his word alone, for as the

58. Mt 15.11.

59. Mt 12.8.

60. Jn 7.4.

61. Jn 7.5.

62. Jer 12.6. Here we read “fair” (*kala*) with the LXX, rather than Cyril’s probable misreading “evil” (*kaka*).

63. Jas 1.1.

prophet says, "The lion will roar, and who will not be afraid?"⁶⁴ Christ, then, is "*a lion's whelp*," and it is as though he had grown up "*from a sprouting plant*" and from a noble root, namely from the holy Virgin.

Christ is also the rod of power that God sent us from Zion,⁶⁵ the staff that comforts and sustains all,⁶⁶ the scepter of uprightness and of the kingdom,⁶⁷ the staff that, on the one hand, justly and gently tends the flock of the saints, and that, on the other, shatters like a potter's vessel those who cannot bear to be governed by him.⁶⁸ He is the rod of Aaron that was placed in the divine tabernacle and brought into the holy of holies, the almond rod that blossomed, which is a symbol of resurrection, for the wood of the almond tree somehow causes wakefulness. So the mystery of the resurrection is revered among the churches of God. For this reason the blessed Jacob, describing Christ as "*a sprouting plant*," immediately made mention of those things to happen at the fulfillment of the divine economy. He said, "*You crouch down,*⁶⁹ *lying like a lion*," that is to say, you were not unwilling to submit to death, but like a lion you were able to seize and terrify all others, to escape the clutches of the hunters. You lay down voluntarily, yet you were not, as those who intended to crucify you supposed, overcome by death, but you were like someone in need of sleep, who closed his eyes momentarily.

"*Who will rouse him?*" it then says. It is as though it said that he lay down willingly, yet he did not need the help of any other to bring about his resurrection. For he is all-powerful, himself being the power of the Father, capable of all things, so that he is even able without any difficulty whatsoever to restore life to his "temple."⁷⁰ This, we note, is what he said when speaking to the Jews: "Destroy this temple, and in three days [356] I will raise it

64. Am 3.8.

65. Cf. Ps 110.2 (109.2 LXX).

66. Cf. Ps 23.4 (22.4 LXX).

67. Cf. Ps 45.6 (44.7 LXX).

68. Cf. Ps 2.9.

69. Lit. "fall down."

70. Here "temple" refers to the body of Jesus, as is clear from the context of the following citation.

up.”⁷¹ So then, the word makes absolutely clear that there was nobody who worked together with him in this matter, and that he alone was sufficient to do this, having been born with such power.

Now it reveals when the time of his coming will be when it says, “*A prince shall not be lacking from Judah, nor a ruler from his loins, until there comes what is stored up for him; he is the expectation of the nations.*” For Jews exercised authority, and there were rulers of Israelite descent among them until the time of Herod son of Antipas, a native of Palestine, who claimed the right to rule and was called a tetrarch. It was in his days that Christ, “*the expectation of the nations,*” was born. It is not necessary to demonstrate that the multitude taken from the nations were saved when he was born, since the matter is patently obvious.⁷²

That the new and recently born Gentile people of God, however, were admitted through faith and that Israel will be called in after them, it directly teaches when it says, “*He ties his foal to the vine.*” Christ the true vine bound to himself through faith, so to speak, the people of the Gentiles,⁷³ who are likened to a foal. And he bound to the branch of the vine, that is to say, to his love, “*his donkey’s colt,*” meaning those originating from the more ancient mother of the Jews, namely the people of the synagogue who have come to believe. How could one doubt that practically the whole of inspired Scripture speaks to us of this mystery?

That he would make his flesh red with his own blood when he was nailed to the tree and pierced by a spear, it makes manifest when it says, “*He will wash his robe in wine, and his garment in the blood of grapes.*” And so, the divine Isaiah also, in speaking of Christ ascending into heaven, says that the holy angels, the powers on high, ask, “Who is this that comes from Edom, with red garments from Bozrah?”⁷⁴ And again he says, “Why are your garments red, and your robes like those of someone who has trodden the winepress?”⁷⁵

71. Jn 2.19.

72. Lit. “shouts out.”

73. Var. “the people who were saved from among the Gentiles.”

74. Is 63.1.

75. Is 63.2.

Though he had been among the dead, and though he had endured the raging of the Jews, the blows and the insults, he who suffered for us and who brought salvation to all under heaven did not reckon such things of any great account. Rather, he ever feels the most cordial and hearty joyfulness. This is shown when it says, "*His eyes will sparkle more than wine.*" These words may be interpreted, in my view, as meaning his pleasure, and the eternal joyfulness and exuberance of his Godhead. For the joyful mind is always inclined to gentleness and especially disdains those having the tendency to sorrowfulness.

When the passage continues to speak of "*his teeth*," saying that they are white, it means that the words of his mouth are pure and bright. For certainly Christ says nothing without purpose, but rather he speaks what is plain and true. Everything he utters is sacred and of great value, and produces such a great illumination of soul and mind in those who listen.

Concerning Zebulun

*"Zebulun will dwell by the seashore, and he will be a haven for ships; his border will extend as far as Sidon."*⁷⁶

Earlier [357] we said that when investigating the text of the prophecy set before us—its character, and how it might best be described when we study it carefully—we should state both that which is similar to those things already done previously, and we should also especially explain the meaning of the names. In this way the passage is in effect reshaped, indicating the manner in which things to come are foreshown and, I believe, what their interpretation is.

This very thing can in fact clearly be seen again in the case of Zebulun, and the following material. For by those whose practice it is particularly to explain such things, Zebulun is taken as signifying "prosperity" and "blessing."⁷⁷ So we find that certain of the people of Israel were indeed blessed, and were made rich and prosperous in all things pleasing to God. Those who have

⁷⁶ Gn 49.13.

⁷⁷ In Hebrew the name appears to be related to the idea of giving a gift (cf. Gn 30.20).

been justified through faith in Christ and enlightened by the grace of the Holy Spirit are truly able to cry out, "We are blessed⁷⁸ by the Lord, who made heaven and earth."⁷⁹ The blessed prophet Isaiah, I believe, also concurs with this when he said, "The way of the godly has been made straight, and the way of the godly has been prepared; for the way of the Lord is justice."⁸⁰ And so the God of all has commanded that the illumined and the blessed should be invited into the sacred and divine court, saying, "Open the gates, let the people that observes righteousness and preserves truth enter, maintaining truth and keeping peace."⁸¹ Moreover, so that those who fall over the obstructing stumbling blocks are not kept back from good things, he has commanded that a good way,⁸² as it were, should be made and that the entrance-way should be laid open, as he says to his holy ministers, "Go through my gates, and cast the stones out of the road."⁸³ Surely then, those people of Israel who valued faith in Christ were blessed and made prosperous.

It is clearly affirmed that the people of Zebulun would inhabit the region beside the sea. It is as though it was saying that Israel would later on be mingled with the Gentiles, as if the two peoples were brought together into one flock, and were placed under the care of him who is by nature the one good chief shepherd, that is, Christ. That this figure is true the word of inspired Scripture readily proves when it assigns the area beside the sea to the Gentiles. For this is what it says, "The region of Zebulun, the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, and the rest who inhabit the coastland, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people living in darkness, behold a great light."⁸⁴ You see how it refers to the region of Zebulun as belonging to the Gentiles, who also have seen a great light, through Christ that is.

78. Or "May we be blessed."

79. Ps 115.15 (113.23 LXX).

80. Is 26.7-8.

81. Is 26.2-3.

82. Cyril is here punning on the fact that the noun for "prosperity" (*eudidia*), used earlier, may be broken down into the two components approximating to "good way."

83. Is 62.10.

84. Is 9.1-2 (8.23-9.1 LXX).

So Israel, as a fellow inhabitant, has been illuminated along with those who dwell in the coastland. This means, I believe, to be made to prosper by God. For in being thoroughly illuminated, one is necessarily caused to prosper as well. This we also understand when the Savior says to the people of the Jews, "While you have the light, walk in the light, so that darkness will not overtake you."⁸⁵

The people, therefore, who once dwelt by themselves, and who [360] avoided mixing with the Gentiles, will be fellow inhabitants with them, being in no way different from them. For the dividing wall has been broken down by Christ, and the law with its commandments and decrees⁸⁶ has been annulled. Henceforth the two peoples are set forth as one new man in Christ through the Spirit.

It then says, "*he will be a haven for ships*," as though he would be in a place of safe refuge, unbeaten by the waves, fastening his cables to the hope that is in Christ. For as if coming out of a great storm, by the grace of Christ he will enter the harbor, just like a merchant ship reaching its haven.

In saying that his borders would even "*extend as far as Sidon*," it seems to imply that there will be such a great spiritual gathering of the two peoples into one, as though the people from the race of Israel would occupy those cities also. These cities were very much guilty and blameworthy before God since they once led astray and in a way plundered those who worshiped him. For he said in a certain passage through the mouth of the prophet, "And what are you to me, O Tyre and Sidon, and all Galilee of the Gentiles? Are you rendering me a recompense, or do you bear malice against me? Quickly and speedily I will return your recompense upon your own heads, because you have taken my silver and gold, and have brought my fine treasures into your temples. Also, you have sold the children of Judah and the children of Israel to the Greeks, that you might remove them from their territory."⁸⁷

85. Jn 12.35.

86. Here reading *en dogmasi* for *endeigmasi*, the latter meaning "with proofs."

87. Jl 3.4-6 (4.4-6 LXX).

Note, then, how those cities that in the past were fearsome and hostile, assisting in the ruin of the people of Israel, will welcome those who believe, giving them no cause to fear. These two peoples of Christ our Savior will be united in peace and oneness of spirit, Christ bringing an end to the enmity, making Israel to live together with the Gentiles in love. In such a way then, I consider, and not in any other, does Zebulun dwell by the seashore.

Concerning Issachar

*"Issachar desired that which is good, resting in the midst of his inheritance. Seeing that his resting place was good and that the land was fertile, he bowed his shoulder to labor and became a farmer."*⁸⁸

Now the meaning of Issachar is "reward."⁸⁹ From what the name signifies we obtain a certain type and a distinct representation of those who are allotted to Christ, being in the nature of a reward, as it were, from God the Father. "Ask of me," says David, "and I will give you the nations as your inheritance, and the ends of the earth as your possession."⁹⁰ In another psalm he again indicates, it seems to me, those who are given to Emmanuel: "Behold, children are an inheritance from the Lord, the reward of the fruit of the womb."⁹¹ It says believers from the race of Israel, and also from the other multitude, namely that of the Gentiles, were given to Emmanuel as a kind of reward. Having designated Jesus as Lord, it also says that he himself was "the fruit of the womb," on account of his having the same nature as ourselves. For he was born from a woman, and was shown to be the fruit of a virgin womb.

Christ, therefore, has acquired those who believe, and to God the Father in heaven he says of them, "Those you have given me out of the world [361], they were yours, and you gave them to me."⁹² These, then, are those who have desired what

88. Gn 49.14-15.

89. This would seem to be close to the Hebrew meaning (cf. Gn 30.18).

90. Ps 2.8.

91. Ps 127.3 (126.3 LXX).

92. Jn 17.6.

is good, that is to say, everything whatsoever that might be said to be truly excellent and especially pleasing to God. This they esteem greatly and diligently perform, as though proclaiming from a good heart, "The judgments of the Lord are true and altogether justified, more desirable than gold and many precious stones."⁹³ One good thing besides this is the desire to be under Christ himself. This is what the bride also says in the Song of Songs, "I delighted in his shade and sat down."⁹⁴

So then, the people who are so inclined first give careful consideration to those things allotted to them by God, that is, the good things promised to the godly in hope, concerning which the divine David said, "My allotted portions are in your hands."⁹⁵ They will, as it were, wholly and utterly stay and rest upon these, because they expect them to come to pass. Having commended, therefore, their own counsel and judgment, esteeming the rest to be found in these things as the cause of immeasurable wonder, that is, eternal honor, life in perfect sanctification, unending glory, a permanent kingdom, and things also which transcend both mind and speech, they will then exercise endurance.

In this way Issachar, having seen that the land was fertile, "*bowed his shoulder*," it says, and took a liking to labor. He follows the example here of those used to tilling the ground, regarding it as a most noble task, who are most industrious and lovers of digging, keen to labor hard at farming. It is as though they would receive from a rich land, by which we are to understand, I believe, abundant fruit and the things that the land would produce. The wise Hosea also entreats us in this matter, saying, "Sow for yourselves righteousness, gather in the fruit of life, enlighten yourselves with the light of knowledge; seek the Lord until the fruit of righteousness comes upon you."⁹⁶ The blessed Paul adds to this when he says, "Now he who provides seed to the sower and bread for food will provide and multiply your supply of seed, and increase the fruit of your righteousness, so

93. Ps 19.9–10 (18.10–11 LXX).

94. Song 2.3.

95. Ps 31.15 (30.16 LXX).

96. Hos 10.12.

that always having all sufficiency in everything you may have an abundance for every good deed."⁹⁷

Concerning Dan

*"Dan will judge"⁹⁸ his people, as also being one of the tribes in Israel. And let Dan be a snake by the roadside, lying upon the path, biting the horse's heel so that the rider falls backwards, waiting for salvation from the Lord."*⁹⁹

Once again the content of the oracle corresponds to the etymology of the name, for Dan means "judge" or "judgment."¹⁰⁰ In itself this tribe depicted, as it were, that glorious and prominent band of holy apostles, who were placed in authority over believers, and who obtained the exercise of judgment, as Christ himself assigned to them. And so the divine Paul said, "Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life?"¹⁰¹

Now, according to the Scriptures, Christ is the one Judge and Lawgiver. But since the apostles are Christ's ambassadors, and they have been commissioned with the message of reconciliation, it is no contradiction for them to be understood as judges in the same way [364] as Christ. The great Isaiah set forth both the sacred kingship of Christ and the instatement of the holy apostles when he declared to us in a certain passage, "Behold, a righteous king will reign, and rulers will rule with judgment."¹⁰² For in the past those kings of the tribe of Judah reigned in Jerusalem, while those serving at the holy tabernacle, having obtained the lot of the priesthood, were ordained to exercise judgment, for "the lips of a priest should preserve judgment, and people should seek the law from his mouth."¹⁰³

When the shadow of the law receded, so to speak, and the

97. 2 Cor 9.10, 8.

98. Here "judge" is meant in the Hebraic sense of "provide justice for" or "govern."

99. Gn 49.16-18.

100. This is correct (cf. Gn 30.6).

101. 1 Cor 6.3.

102. Is 32.1.

103. Mal 2.7.

worship in spirit and truth was introduced through Christ, the most eminent judges were needed for the world. To this end the divine disciples were summoned and took the place of those who taught according to the law. The mother of the Jews, which is Jerusalem, was therefore addressed by God through the psalmist, saying, "In the place of your fathers, your sons have been born to you,"¹⁰⁴ which is to say, "Those who are called your sons have assumed the place of your fathers." And then to our Lord Jesus Christ he says, "You shall appoint them as rulers over all the earth."¹⁰⁵

One can see how this attained its fulfillment, for we have been assigned rulers and we have been given judges in all places, these being the holy disciples. Through them the mystery of Christ is explained, since they themselves are also keepers of the saving word and the ones who prescribe what deeds ought to be done. They determine what is unprofitable for those being instructed and what is impure, yet at the same time counseling them to embrace that which is suitable for producing some benefit.

So Dan, meaning those who would later be appointed to judge peoples and nations, will exercise dominion with power and great glory, just as one tribe ruled over the Israelites. By this I mean that Judah only was the ruling tribe and no other.

That those appointed by the Savior to be leaders throughout the world were highly honored and attained supreme glory in the sight of those who worship him, who is able to doubt? Yet for them to rule would not in any way be an easy task. They would undergo numerous severe trials and encounter obstacles, and so they would not at all find the exercise of apostleship to be free from danger. This is indicated figuratively when it says, "*Let Dan,*" in the place of which we are to put the people who persecute, "*be like a snake by the roadside, lying upon the path, biting the horse's heel,*" that is, putting forth fearful and unyielding doctrines.¹⁰⁶

104. Ps 45.16 (44.17 LXX).

105. This is a direct continuation of the foregoing citation.

106. We note Cyril's manner of double interpretation, which sees Dan first-ly in a positive light as the apostles who are entrusted with judgment, then sec-

How hard it is to avoid the bite of the viper, even though it only be in the heel. For it says, "He shall watch¹⁰⁷ your head, and you shall watch his heel."¹⁰⁸ Thus certain men lay in wait for the holy apostles in order to bring about the death of their bodies. When we say, then, that they endured such a thing, it was like what happens to a rider when his horse stumbles and he falls backwards. Now when the rider has toppled backwards and has fallen to the ground, he waits for one to rescue¹⁰⁹ him. [365] So the divine disciples await the time of their glory and salvation, since they have been called to an unshakable and everlasting kingdom, as Christ proclaims to them, "Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world,"¹¹⁰ and "I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."¹¹¹ Surely then, they will receive the unfading crown of glory.¹¹²

Now if one took it to mean that there would not be those like snakes lying in wait for Dan by the roadside, but that Dan himself would lie in wait for others, to this we say that the scribes and the Pharisees, occupying the place of those who judge and instruct the people, attacked Christ like the most terrible of vipers. He was like a horseman galloping along a smooth and level path when they, overcome by impiety, struck out and bit at him. And although the horseman fell, willingly suffering the death of his flesh, he did in fact come back to life again, accounting the Father to be his helper. For the Son, being the power of God the Father, himself restored to life his own "temple."¹¹³ So, having exposed himself to peril as a man, he may be said to have been saved by the Father, though he is in nature God, himself maintaining for good the whole of creation, both

only and negatively as those who, corresponding to the "*snake*" of the oracle, persecute both the apostles and Christ himself.

107. Or "give attention to."

108. Gn 3.15. The Hebrew verb appearing twice in this verse is generally understood to mean "wound" or "crush."

109. Or "save."

110. Mt 25.34.

111. 2 Tm 4.7.

112. Cf. 1 Pt 5.4.

113. See n. 70 above.

visible and invisible. This you may understand when the divine Paul says of him, "For though he was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by the power of God."¹¹⁴

Concerning Gad

*"Gad, a band of raiders will attack him, but he himself will attack them, pursuing them closely."*¹¹⁵

Again, the name Gad evidently has an intended meaning, which is either "testing" or "band of raiders."¹¹⁶ This, in my opinion, is an appropriate meaning, from which is to be understood that God-hating and prideful swarm of scribes and Pharisees who rejected the divine gospel message. These men, deeming the most essential matters to be unprofitable, gnashed their teeth at Christ, who was teaching those things hidden in the shadows of the law. Yet he was extremely popular with the people and highly esteemed, and he equally astounded those throughout all Judea with the excellence of the miracles he performed, presenting to them also those wonderful teachings that result in pleasing God in every respect.

And so, according to what the prophet says, when Christ left Bethany and entered Jerusalem, he was "lowly, riding on a donkey, even on a young foal."¹¹⁷ While the children going ahead of him proclaimed, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"¹¹⁸ certain of those going along with him spread their garments on the road, and thought the manner of his entrance to be wonderful. But these others were enraged, smitten with the piercing sting of envy. They conversed together, even alleging, in effect, that there was the need to commit murder. For they said, "Look, you can do nothing. Behold, the whole world has gone after him!"¹¹⁹ So, since they feared the multitude of those who had already come to believe,

¹¹⁴. 2 Cor 13.4.

¹¹⁵. Gn 49.19.

¹¹⁶. The Greek words relating to "test," "trial," on one hand, and "raider," "plunderer," "pirate," on the other, are similar. See Book 4, n. 136.

¹¹⁷. Zec 9.9.

¹¹⁸. Mt 21.9.

¹¹⁹. Jn 12.19.

they restrained their actions for the time being and held the proposed attack in check.

Then, in order that Christ might give offense to the Roman commanders, they sent some of their own disciples with others of those called Herodians, who said [368], "Teacher, we know that you are true, and defer to no one, for you do not regard people with partiality. Is it lawful to pay tax to Caesar, or not?" But they were instantly rebuked, and when the denarius had been shown, Christ said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."¹²⁰ At this they were greatly embarrassed and did not pursue this test any further but set about planning another means of testing him.

Later, when he made a whip out of cords and drove from the temple all those selling sheep and cattle, saying, "Take these things out of here! Do not make my Father's house a house of merchandise!"¹²¹ those men were there and became indignant. "By what authority do you do these things?" they asked. "And who gave you this authority?" What, then, did Christ say to this? He said, "I will also ask you a question, and you answer me. The baptism of John—where was it from? From heaven, or from men?" They reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Then why did you not believe him?' If we say, 'From men,' we fear the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet." So they said, "We do not know." What did Christ say to this? "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."¹²²

Gad, therefore, indicates a band of raiders, or testers, meaning the Pharisees who were constantly testing. Yet they themselves were immediately¹²³ tested in return.¹²⁴ For, according to the words of the prophet, Christ was the one "who catches the

120. Cf. Mt 22.16–21.

121. Cf. Jn 2.15–16.

122. Cf. Mt 21.23–27.

123. The term "immediately" here picks up the idiom from the citation of Gn 49.19 (there translated "closely") that opens this section.

124. We observe here again, as was noted also in the previous section with regard to Dan (see n. 106), Cyril's contrasting double interpretation. The meaning given for "Gad" is applied to the Pharisees, yet the action ascribed to him in the latter part of the opening citation is here ascribed to Christ.

wise in their wisdom, and who cleverly turns the sophistry of schemers into a question against them."¹²⁵

Concerning Asher

*"Asher's bread is rich, and he will provide food for rulers."*¹²⁶

Now Asher signifies "riches," for that is what the name means.¹²⁷ This might, I believe, be understood of him "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,"¹²⁸ that is, Christ, who is the treasure hidden in a field, the pearl of great value, and the one who, in the person of Wisdom, expressly says, "Riches and glory are mine, abundant possessions and righteousness."¹²⁹ He himself is the one who visited the earth, and, as David says, "you have enriched it abundantly."¹³⁰ The most-wise¹³¹ Paul also writes to us about him in a certain passage, saying, "I give thanks to my God always concerning you for the grace of God given to you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in all speech and all knowledge."¹³²

For even though he was rich, in that he was God, yet for our sakes he shared in our poverty, in order that by his poverty we might become rich.¹³³ This is evidently what is meant by the "*bread is rich*," that is, full of fatness and nourishment. For our Lord Jesus Christ feeds us, descending not as physical manna like that given long ago to the people of Israel, but by making himself to dwell in the souls of believers through the Holy Spirit. That is why he said to the people of the Jews, "Truly [369], truly, I say to you, it was not Moses that gave you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heav-

¹²⁵. Cf. Jb 5.13; 1 Cor 3.19.

¹²⁶. Gn 49.20.

¹²⁷. The name Asher (*'āšēr*) would appear to be related to the idea of happiness (cf. Gn 30.13). The Hebrew term for "rich" (*'āšir*) is not dissimilar, but is an altogether different word.

¹²⁸. Col 2.3.

¹²⁹. Prv 8.18.

¹³⁰. Cf. Ps 65.9 (64.10 LXX).

¹³¹. Var. omit "The most-wise."

¹³². 1 Cor 1.5.

¹³³. Cf. 2 Cor 8.9.

en and gives life to the world,"¹³⁴ and again, "I am the bread of life."¹³⁵

This life-giving bread might also be understood in another way, that is, in a more mystical manner.¹³⁶ It says, "*he provides food for rulers.*" Now I would say that thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, angels and archangels, even the entire holy and spiritual creation, make Christ their food. So the matter might suitably be interpreted. To those, however, who are leaders of the flock on earth, he also distributes food. This is obviously food of a spiritual nature—the revelation of divine mysteries and the knowledge of all virtue—so that these leaders may also feed those people under their authority with teachings that lead to life. Christ therefore says to these men, "Freely you have received, freely give."¹³⁷ And elsewhere he says, "Who, then, is the faithful and wise servant whom his Lord will put in charge of his household, to give out their allowance of food at the proper time? Truly, I say to you, blessed is that servant whom, when his Lord comes, he will find him doing these things. Truly, I say to you, that he will put him in charge of all his possessions."¹³⁸

We shall find the teachers of the churches engaged in this task, and before them the holy apostles especially did so. The blessed¹³⁹ Paul, for instance, wrote to certain believers, "I desire to see you, that I may impart some spiritual gift to you to strengthen you."¹⁴⁰ So these could also say that they had been comforted by God since he obviously filled them with good things from above and richly nourished them by means of the provisions granted through the Spirit.

Asher, then, is Christ, or those who have been made rich in

134. Jn 6.32–33.

135. Jn 6.35, 48.

136. The adjective employed by Cyril has a range of possible equivalents, such as, "secret," "esoteric," "ineffable." What is to be understood from this is immediately explained in the following sentences.

137. Mt 10.8.

138. Mt 24.45–47.

139. Var. omit "The blessed."

140. Rom 1.11.

Christ, with reference to whom the rich bread may also be understood.

Concerning Naphtali

*"Naphtali is a spreading stem, imparting beauty to its fruit."*¹⁴¹

I would think it appropriate, and not off the mark, to apply this again to Emmanuel himself and, if one wished, also to those justified by faith and sanctified in the Spirit. For it was in fact said to the mother of the Jews, Jerusalem, through the mouth of Jeremiah, "The Lord called your name Fair Olive Tree, appearing good for shade. At the sound of it being cropped, fire was kindled against it. Great is the affliction coming against you. Its branches have become worthless, and the mighty Lord who planted you has pronounced evil against you."¹⁴² For when it was necessary to show the olive tree the attention due to it (for this, and nothing else, I believe, is what it "being cropped" signifies), it then also says that it was ruined and set on fire, because it chose to disregard the presence of the vinedresser. He, as it were, with the sharpest of pruning hooks, namely by the working of the Spirit, removed us from among the worthless branches, that is, those which were the most earthly and carnal, so that we might bear forth the desire and eagerness for those things which are of more value than all else.

We may hear, then, what Christ the Savior of all plainly says [372]: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that bears fruit he prunes, so that it may bear more fruit."¹⁴³ For Jesus Christ, the Lord of us who are brought to newness of life, is like the root and stem of a vine firmly embedded in the ground. And we are like branches that, through our union with him in the Spirit, grow in him and are dependent upon him. Being united in a bond of love, and becoming lux-

¹⁴¹. Gn 49.21.

¹⁴². Jer 11.16–17. The interchange of pronouns between second and third persons and the poor translation of the LXX make this citation awkward to render in good English. The Greek has been followed fairly closely.

¹⁴³. Jn 15.1–2.

uriant through the goodness received from him, we are nourished on the divine grace so as to bear the fruit of virtue.

So God the Father himself cares for our needs together with the Son. It is evident, however, that even though Christ is understood to be a vine, and the Father the vinedresser, he nevertheless cuts off the branch that is completely unproductive in Christ. And he considers worthy of his attention, as being something most excellent, the one that is effectual and fruitful in Christ.

When, therefore, the mother of the Jews, described by the prophet as a fair olive tree that was good for shade, ought to have been found in a better condition, it was then that God destroyed her, and a fire was kindled in her. So the wise John says, "Even now the axe is laid at the root of the trees. Every tree, therefore, that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."¹⁴⁴

That the celebrated city would meet its end through coming disasters, the prophet Zechariah expressed beforehand in an oracle, saying, "And the mourning of Jerusalem will be like the mourning for a pomegranate orchard cut down in the plain."¹⁴⁵ Again he said to her, "Open your doors, O Lebanon, and let fire consume your cedars. Let the pine tree wail, because the cedar has fallen, because the mighty trees have been greatly afflicted. Wail, O oaks of Bashan, because the thick forest has been torn down."¹⁴⁶ For Mount Lebanon is luxuriant in cedar trees. Its trees are fragrant and especially valued for their excellence. Lebanon, therefore, represents Jerusalem, which had a much-admired multitude of priests, that is to say, she had a dignified status derived from the law. For these men were appointed rulers, and were like the strongest and most excellent trees in the forest, having a stature above all others, with many people under their authority. Yet Jerusalem, that is, Lebanon, was set on fire. Those illustrious men within her, those who were most prominent, possessing much glory, bewailed one another as they fell and perished, being brought down at the hands of

¹⁴⁴. Mt 3.10.

¹⁴⁵. Zec 12.11.

¹⁴⁶. Zec 11.1-2.

those who were in a way like woodcutters, namely the powerful Roman generals.

Yet our Lord Jesus Christ, since those evil men perished so dreadfully, has become "*a spreading stem*." For he always enjoys the infinite supply of heavenly provisions, and spreads, one might say, throughout the whole earth. This very thing God plainly declared beforehand through the mouth of Ezekiel, saying, "And I will take from the choice branches of the cedar, from its very top, and I will crop off one from their midst, and I will plant it upon a lofty mountain, and hang it on a mountain height of Israel. Yea, I will plant it, and it will bring forth shoots and bear fruit, and it will become [373] a great cedar. All kinds of animals will rest under it, and every kind of bird will rest in its shade; and its branches will be restored. And all the trees of the field will know that I, the Lord, am he who brings down the high tree, and raises up the low tree, who withers the green tree, and makes the dry tree flourish. I, the Lord, have spoken, and I will do it."¹⁴⁷

See, then, that God the Father, taking the choice branches of the cedar, planted for us the tree of life, that is to say, Christ. By the choice branches of the cedar it means the tribe of Judah—that which always had the rule and which was more noble than the others. From this tribe there came forth Jesse, and David, and the holy Virgin, who gave birth to Jesus. That the branch taken from the choice cedar was also hanged upon a cross¹⁴⁸ on our account, and became a goodly and flowery tree, how can one doubt?

Moreover, we, who were formerly dry trees without any fruit, have sprouted forth by the will of the Father, while they who received only the sap and life of the law, namely the people of Israel, in a way became dry and withered. They were once exalted, yet we were lowly and cast down. We, however, have now been exalted in Christ through faith, while they have fallen from their former glory and have become lowly. Therefore, God, the Lord of all, is he who by a mere command humbles the exalted

147. Ezek 17:22–24.

148. The word *xulon* has the sense of "wood," "tree," "gallows."

and raises up the lowly, the one who withers the green tree and makes the dry tree flourish.

Because those of the ancient synagogue were no better than thorns and brambles, they were, in effect, cut off from the holy land, while the multitude of those with faith grew up, as it were, in their place. These, we learn, can be likened to the most fragrant of trees, as God says, "And I will turn the desert into pools of water, and the land¹⁴⁹ into watercourses. I will put the cedar in the land without water, and also the box tree, the myrtle, the cypress, and the white poplar."¹⁵⁰ Also later it says, "And instead of the thornbush, the cypress will come up, and instead of the nettle the myrtle will come up."¹⁵¹

By the cedar we are to understand the hope of incorruption held by those who believe. For the cedar is not liable to decay. By the box tree we are to understand that frivolous or trivial thoughts are inappropriate to the mind of those in Christ. For they are all people of intelligence, since they have Christ for their understanding. The wood of the box tree is also solid and has considerable sturdiness. By the myrtle we are to understand the fragrance found in sanctification and the perpetual flourishing caused by grace. By the cypress we are to understand height and sweetness of smell. When I say "height," I mean with respect to virtue and eminence as regards doctrines. And by the white poplar we are to understand the splendor and whiteness of righteousness. For those in Christ are splendid, made glorious by the grace they receive from him. So then, "*Naphtali is a spreading stem,*" whether speaking of Christ himself, or of those who are friends of Christ.

When it says, "*imparting beauty to its fruit,*" it likewise hints at such a thing as this, in my opinion. For when at the beginning Christ appeared in the same form as ourselves, it was not believed that he was God by nature, and that he had become flesh. And so, the Jews made so bold as to try to stone him [376], making the accusation against him, "You, though you are a

149. LXX: "the thirsty land."

150. Is 41.18–19.

151. Is 55.13.

man, make yourself God.”¹⁵² We find that even the holy apostles themselves, for the reason that they did not yet clearly understand the mystery concerning him, were amazed at him, since he could work miracles. So, when Christ commanded it to happen, the sea was calmed, and the wild blowing of the wind was stopped. And it says that the apostles reasoned in themselves, saying, “What kind of man is this, that even the sea and the winds obey him?”¹⁵³

Do you see how he who is God by nature, though he had become flesh, was not yet known to those in the world, and had not yet attained his majestic glory? But when knowledge of him increased among us, then it was eventually believed that he was God by nature, and that to him every knee should bow, and that the whole world should worship him. Surely then, when that knowledge of him was brought to perfection among us, he was then perceived by the sons of men to be most beautiful.

Now if the words “*imparting beauty to its fruit*” are understood with reference to us, their meaning is apparent. For since we are always increasing in virtue, and attaining to better things, namely those things that lie ahead, as the blessed Paul said,¹⁵⁴ then our beauty is becoming more and more evident. By this beauty I mean spiritual beauty, so that it might also be said to us, “The king desired your beauty.”¹⁵⁵

Concerning Joseph

“Joseph is a son who has increased.”¹⁵⁶ My imitable¹⁵⁷ youngest son has increased; return to me. Those who plotted against him reviled him,

152. Jn 10.33.

153. Mt 8.27.

154. Cf. Phil 3.13.

155. Ps 45.11 (44.12 LXX).

156. Or “has grown.”

157. Here we follow the original word appearing in the LXX, the adjective *zêlôtos*, rather than the cognate noun *zêlôtês* used by Cyril at this point. This is necessary better to understand Cyril’s subsequent discussion, which in fact deals with the former of these two. For this term a range of meanings is possible. Most suitable to this present context would perhaps be the sense of “attractive,” “desirable.” In the following exposition, however, Cyril takes it in its

and the archers¹⁵⁸ pressed him hard. But their bows were mightily shattered, and the sinews of their arms were made weak by the Mighty One of Jacob (by which we are to understand 'the God of your father who strengthened Israel'). My God has helped you, and he has blessed you with the blessing of heaven above, and with the blessing of the earth that possesses all things, on account of the blessing of the breasts and of the womb, the blessing of your father and of your mother. He has exceeded the blessings of the abiding mountains, and the blessings of the everlasting hills. These will be upon the head of Joseph, and upon the head of the brothers over whom he has ruled."¹⁵⁹

Again the words of the prophecy point us to Emmanuel himself. What is revealed by the prophecy here might, I believe, be nothing other than what I said just now on the matter of "*imparting beauty to its fruit*." When it says that he had "*increased*," it actually indicates his moving on from how he was at first and the advancement of his glory with respect to his physical nature, as may rightly be understood. For when the Only-Begotten Word of God, being also God from God, emptied himself, as the Scriptures say, and willingly came down to be that which he was not, he was clothed with this most inglorious flesh, and appeared in the form of a servant, becoming obedient to God the Father until death.¹⁶⁰ It then says that he was exalted, and that by way of a reward he received the name above every name (which he did not in any way have from his human nature), according to the words of the blessed Paul.¹⁶¹ Yet the truth of the matter was [377] that nothing was given to him which was not naturally his in the first place—far from it. Rather, it ought to be understood as an ascent and return to that first estate, which was essentially and inseparably his. So it is that, having put on the lowly nature of

other sense of "worthy of imitation." In order to appreciate Cyril's treatment of the term, therefore, both here and in the exposition it has been rendered "imitable." The word has yet a further meaning, that of "enviable," "provoking to jealousy," which Cyril will also explore.

158. Hebrew here employs the idiomatic phrase "masters [or 'lords'] of arrows," which has been preserved in the LXX. Cyril will draw upon this literal sense during the course of his interpretation.

159. Gn 49.22–26.

160. Cf. Phil 2.7–8.

161. Cf. Phil 2.9.

humanity through the Incarnation, he said, "Father, glorify me with the glory which I had with you before the world was."¹⁶² For he always coexisted in his own divine glory with the Father¹⁶³ before all ages and all time and before the foundation of the world. So when speaking of Christ, the increase is to be understood as an advancement in glory, which in a sense God most abundantly and most evidently always has. This is because he is increasingly being apprehended according to his nature by those who are in the world, and is being confessed and worshiped as Lord of all along with God the Father.

While Christ himself, however, was the one who made the world, he might appropriately be understood as also being the "youngest." For he appeared in the last ages of the world after that glorious and admirable band of holy prophets, and, generally speaking, after all those before his visitation who were considered to enjoy the status of sons on account of their virtue.

That Emmanuel was "*imitable*," how could one doubt? He is imitated by the saints, who diligently follow in his footsteps and are transformed into his divine beauty. Making him the pattern of their deeds, they acquire the most excellent glory of all.

*Zêlôtos*¹⁶⁴ might, however, be understood in another way by those who do not care to practice love, by which I mean the leaders of the Jews, the scribes and Pharisees, who suffered the pangs of bitter envy within themselves. These, by making Christ's incomparable glory a cause of jealousy, were very much overcome by it. For Christ raised the dead who were already odorous and decaying, and showed himself to be greater than death itself. But they, though they ought to have marveled and come to believe in him, no longer doubting anything, this they did not do. Rather, they gnashed at him in envy, and felt bitter vexation in their hearts. He healed a man who was blind from birth, and they called him a sinner. A horde of unclean demons was driven out, and they falsely claimed him to have been under the direction of the power of Beelzebul. They made to cast stones at him, declaring impiously, "We are not stoning you for any good deed,

¹⁶². Jn 17:5.

¹⁶³. Lit. "Begetter" (*gennêtôr*).

¹⁶⁴. See n. 157 above.

but for blasphemy, because you, though you are a man, make yourself God."¹⁶⁵ They were cut to the heart and said, "This is the heir. Come, let us kill him."¹⁶⁶

Christ was, then, for those who chose to be hateful, the cause of envy,¹⁶⁷ yet he was not in any way overcome by them. For although he suffered the cross, since he was God he came back to life, having trampled upon death, as though God the Father were summoning him and in effect saying, "*Return to me.*" He ascended into heaven so that he might also hear the words of him saying, "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool under your feet."¹⁶⁸ That these men did in fact become subject, even though they were so greatly enraged against him, it teaches when it says, "*Those who plotted against him reviled him, and the archers pressed him hard.* For these "*masters of arrows*"¹⁶⁹ gathered in council and plotted harsh things [380]. This means the leaders of the people, who sharply attacked Christ, as though wounding him, and all but transfixed him with nails themselves, even though they dared not do that which was unlawful, and they sprang up against him like wild beasts. Yet "*their bows were shattered, and the sinews of their arms were made weak by the Mighty One of Jacob,*" that is, by God the Father, who is the Lord of power.

God also ordained that the Son should be blessed¹⁷⁰ both in heaven and upon the earth. For the divine Paul writes, "When he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, 'And let all the angels of God worship him.'"¹⁷¹ In another place the great David declares to us, "May all the earth worship you, and may they sing praises to you."¹⁷² This, we say, indicates "*the heavenly blessing above,*" and also "*the blessing below on the earth that possesses all*

165. Jn 10.33.

166. Mt 21.38.

167. *zêlôtos*.

168. Ps 110.1 (109.1 LXX); cf. Mt 22.44; Mk 12.36; Lk 20.42-43; Acts 2.34; Heb 1.13.

169. See n. 158 above.

170. Or "be praised," as the noun "blessing" in the following discussion may also be rendered "praise."

171. Heb 1.6; cf. Dt 32.43 LXX.

172. Ps 66.4 (65.4 LXX).

things,” that is to say, in which there is through Christ every kind of goodness and the abundant fruits of devotion to God. For in one passage it says to the Son, “You have visited the earth, and you have watered it and enriched it abundantly.”¹⁷³ It clearly affirms that the heavenly blessing and the earthly have been given to him, when it says, “*on account of the blessing of the breasts and of the womb, the blessing of your father and of your mother.*” Through these words both the birth of the Only-Begotten from God the Father and his birth through the holy Virgin, by which it is also to be understood that he became a man, are very plainly signified. For although he truly was the Son of God the Father by nature, for our sake he underwent birth through a mother, a woman, and suckled at her breast. For it is surely not the case, as is the opinion of some, that he became a man in appearance only,¹⁷⁴ but that he actually did come as a man, the very same thing that we ourselves are, complying with the laws of nature and being sustained by food, even though it was he himself who gave life to the world. Thus the blessed Isaiah, in a certain manner, likewise speaks of the fact that the Lord truly became human in that he needed food suitable for an infant, when he says, “He will eat butter and honey.”¹⁷⁵

So then, Christ was blessed “*on account of the blessing of the breasts and of the womb.*” For as I said before, since he became man and was obedient to the Father, he has inherited the name above every name, and to him every knee shall bow, of those in heaven, those on earth, and those under the earth, confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.¹⁷⁶

Yet, although he came as one of us, he has a place higher than every saint, and, as is fitting for one who is God, he stands above all the renowned fathers from the beginning of the world. For the psalmist says, “Who in the heavens can be compared to the Lord? Or who among the sons of God can be likened to him?”¹⁷⁷ This is what the blessed Jacob teaches when he says,

173. Ps 65.9 (64.10 LXX).

174. Here referring to the false teaching of Docetism.

175. Is 7.15.

176. Cf. Phil 2.8–11.

177. Ps 89.6 (88.7 LXX).

"He has exceeded the blessings of the abiding mountains, and of the everlasting hills." For the eternal and abiding mountains, as well as the everlasting hills, mean the saints, since they are lifted up from the earth, and think nothing of those things that are base. Rather, they seek the things that are above, and reach up to attain especially the highest of virtues. Even the most notable of the fathers, therefore, reach a measure of virtue that is less than the glory of Christ. [381] For they were servants of the household, even though they obtained a place among the children. But it is the Lord who, being a Son, has provided them with those things by means of which they have become so eminent. Thus it is said, "From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace."¹⁷⁸

So the crown of glory will rest essentially upon the head of our Savior. But it will also certainly be the case that a reward will be given to the saints under his authority, who will wear the unfading crown of glory. Having been partakers of his sufferings, they will share in his glory. For he is pleased that, having suffered with him, they should also reign with him.¹⁷⁹

Concerning Benjamin

*"Benjamin is a ravening wolf; in the morning he will eat further, and in the evening he will divide the food."*¹⁸⁰

Rachel first gave birth to the divine Joseph, and then to Benjamin after him. Joseph, however, was called the "youngest" son by his father.¹⁸¹ We grant that this is the case. So we are saying that Benjamin was younger than the youngest. Now Benjamin was in fact the youngest son, and may reasonably be understood as a picture and a type of the youngest people of God, those who were called through the holy disciples after Christ came back to life from the dead and returned to God the Father in heaven.

Benjamin is compared to "*a ravening wolf*," the reason for

¹⁷⁸Jn 1.16.

¹⁷⁹Cf. Rom 8.17; 2 Tm 2.12.

¹⁸⁰Gn 49.27.

¹⁸¹Referring to the description in the earlier citation of Gn 49.22.

which, I think, is his rapacious appetite for receiving instruction. He is always leaping up and down, being especially desirous, as certain wild animals are, for any kind of food that is good for bodily strength, here to be taken in a spiritual sense. These animals are terrible to behold when they are fulfilling their desire for what they need, and when they seize hold of what is good for them. Yet they are swift to seek refuge from those things that tend towards their harm. They are not easily made to fear, not even if they are surrounded by those who are like dogs, who seek to keep them away from good works and words, and who are intent on attacking them. For they have learned, and that most forcibly, what it means when it says, "What shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or persecution, or nakedness, or danger, or the sword?"¹⁸² Moreover, false shepherds—who, as it is written, "aim at the heart, without pity"¹⁸³—are not at all able to turn them away from the path they love to follow. For people such as this, for whom life means suffering, possess considerable endurance,¹⁸⁴ and so they proclaim, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."¹⁸⁵

Even if the way in which we have shown the saints to be compared to ravenous wolves were not correct, no harm would be done, it seems. For surely the Savior also calls himself a lion and a leopard, or a panther, saying, "For I am like a panther to Ephraim, and like a lion to the house of Judah. I will come,¹⁸⁶ and I will go; I will take away, and there will be no deliverer."¹⁸⁷ And those who believe in him he calls "wild animals,"¹⁸⁸ as he says [384] through the mouth of Isaiah, "The wild animals will bless me, the owls¹⁸⁹ and the young ostriches, because I have

182. Rom 8.35.

183. Jb 16.13. In both the Hebrew and LXX of this citation the term here rendered "heart" is literally "kidneys," signifying the inward parts.

184. Or "patience."

185. Phil 1.21.

186. LXX: "I will seize."

187. Hos 5.14.

188. Or "beasts of the field."

189. The precise kind of bird intended by this Greek word (*seirênes*; lit. "Sirens") is uncertain. Other possibilities are the "ostrich" or the "nightin-

given water in the wilderness, and rivers in the waterless land, to provide drink for my chosen race, the people I acquired to declare my praises."¹⁹⁰ See, then, how he called the chosen people "wild animals" and "owls," that is, the most melodious of birds. They are wild animals, because they do not, one may suppose, readily let themselves be tamed by Satan, nor can they be made subject to him. Rather, they leap up against him, in effect causing injury also to those who seek to compel them to do unlawful acts. And they are owls, because they call out most beautifully, speaking of the perfections of Christ, and singing to his honor.

Benjamin, the new people of God by faith, is a wolf that is very determined to accomplish what is needful and, what is more, is able also to give what will benefit others. This is indicated when it says, "*In the morning he will eat further, and in the evening he will divide the food.*" The one who learns is in a way like one who is being fed. For he allows the teachings entrance into his mind, just as the other obviously does with food into his stomach. So the one who is teaching can be equated with the one who is feeding. Thus the divine Paul also compares the manner of teaching to food, for he said, "Solid food is for the mature, for those whose faculties have been trained by practice to distinguish between good and evil."¹⁹¹

So then, "*Benjamin is a ravening wolf; in the morning he will eat further, and in the evening he will divide the food.*" It is as though it said, "Although he is one who wishes to learn further, and who has not yet reached perfection, he may benefit others, and just a short time may prove that even those who have recently come to faith may teach what is profitable." For concerning the people of Israel, on account of their great ignorance, I suppose, and their inner dullness¹⁹² of mind, it is said, "Behold, a foolish people without any sense; who have eyes but do not see, and ears but do not hear,"¹⁹³ and also, "You who have been borne

gale." The latter suits Cyril's discussion best, yet it is doubtful that this is what was intended in the LXX citation from which the term is derived.

190. Is 43.20-21.

191. Heb 5.14.

192. Lit. "roughness."

193. Jer 5.12.

by me from the womb, and taught until your old age.”¹⁹⁴ But to those in the faith, who are in Christ, the wise John writes, “You do not need anyone to teach you, but his anointing teaches you about all things.”¹⁹⁵ For those who have the mind of Christ know all things, and they are not incapable of teaching and exhorting one another.

Now if one relates the prediction concerning Benjamin to the blessed Paul, saying that it was also fulfilled in him, then such would be proper and true. For he who persecuted the church, running like a wolf after those who loved Christ, in just a short time was transformed into the complete opposite. For he began to proclaim the faith that he had once sought to destroy, and being appointed to the office of apostle he offered up a thank offering, even though he had formerly been a blasphemer, persecutor, and man of violence. He himself said that he was also of the tribe of Benjamin.¹⁹⁶ I would further say that the divine David made clear mention of what would happen with regard to Paul, when he said in the Sixty-seventh Psalm, “There is Benjamin, the younger one, in a state of elation, the princes of Judah, their rulers, the princes of Zebulun, the princes [385] of Naphtali.”¹⁹⁷ For the blessed disciples, who were Jews from the race of Israel, became leaders of those justified by faith in Christ, among whom also was the one from the tribe of Benjamin who wrote and said, “For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are of sound mind, it is for you.”¹⁹⁸ For both to Gentiles and to Jews Paul proclaimed the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom and with whom be glory to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

194. Is 46.3-4.

195. 1 Jn 2.27.

196. Cf. Phil 3.5.

197. Ps 68.27 (67.28 LXX).

198. 2 Cor 5.13.

eft: unica in perferendo cruciatu aniequitate ac lenitate. Si osculo prodacoarguit quidem, sed non percutit: si ito corripitur, ita exprobrat, ut tamen uatur: fizelo inflammatus Malchi aua gladio prædide loco suo resti ctus profugiat, omiticum adve r, poposceris, si latronem ob acceperit, eun adifum introdu risti benigna on risti passiones: q d majus ac præf as mortem ipia ulerit, nos con as & injurias a us? Quin hæc c , atque etiamn videte) de quil e differui. Hi di : hi templa, n quod viva vive imæ vivæ, holo

ificia perfecta, Dii denique, Trinitatis ratæ beneficio. Hi populos habent, nos elos: hi temeritatem & audaciam, nos m: hi minas, nos orationes: hi quod per iunt, nos quod ferimus: hi aurum & ar rum, nos repurgatam doctrinam. Feci ibi ⁴² duplices & triplices contignatio (agnosce Scripturæ verba) domum flatilem, fenestris distinctam: at hæc adum fide mea sublimiora sunt, nec cæ ad quos tendo. At mihi grex exiguus? in præcipitia non fertur. At angusta mi aula? sed quæ lupis non pateat, sed quæ onem non admittat, nec a furibus, & ex s transcendatur. Nec dubito quin eam que latiore aliquando visurus sim. ltos enim ex his, qui nunc in luporum mero sunt, inter oves, ac fortasse etiam er pastores, recensendos habeo. Hoc ⁴¹

της ἐν τῷ πάθῃ μακροθυμίας τι προδοθῇ. ἐλέγχει μὲν, ὅπλα ἄφνω συλληφθῇ, ὀνειδίζει μὲν, ἐπὶ μαχαίρα Μάλχῃ τέμνης τὸ αὐτοῦ

ἀποκαίας
ρισελεῖ· κα
εἰς ἄγοντα
διὰ κακίαν
εἰσάξει δια
λανθρόπῃ
ἔπαθημε
Θεὸς καὶ θα
ομοίοις μη
εὐρὸς δὲ καὶ
ομαι, καὶ σ
ἢ πολλάκι
τοι τὰς οἰκ
ς, ἡμεῖς τὸν
ἦν! ὁ καὶ
μαλα λογι
ἀδῶ περὶ

THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH



ST. CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA
GLAPHYRA ON THE
PENTATEUCH, VOLUME 2
EXODUS THROUGH DEUTERONOMY

Translated by Nicholas P. Lunn

ἔτοι δῆμας, ἡμεῖς ἀγγέλους· ὅ
πίσω ἡμεῖς· ἔτοι τὸ ἀπειλεῖν, κα
εὐχεσθαι· ἔτοι τὸ βάλλειν, ἡμε
ἔτοι χρυσὸν καὶ ἄργυρον, ἡμεῖς
φαρμένον. ἐποίησας σεαυτῷ διώ
ροφα; γνῶθι τὰ ῥήματα τῷ γε
πίσων, διεσαλμένον θυρίσιν, ἀλλ
τῷ ἐμῆς πίσεως ὑψηλότερα καὶ τ
εἰς φέρομαι. μικρὸν μοι τὸ ποί
ἐπὶ κρημνῶν φερόμενον. σενή
πλήν λύκοις ἀνεπίστα, π
δεχομένη λησῆν, ὅδε ὑπερβαινο
καὶ ξένοις. ὅψομαι ταύτην εὐ
τυτέραν, πολλὰς καὶ τῶν νυν λ
βάτοις ἀριθμῆσαι με δεῖ τυχόν
τῷτο εὐαγγέλιόνταί μοι ὁ π

THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH

A NEW TRANSLATION

VOLUME 138

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A NEW TRANSLATION

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ST. CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA

GLAPHYRA ON THE
PENTATEUCH, VOLUME 2

EXODUS THROUGH
DEUTERONOMY

Translated by

NICHOLAS P. LUNN

Spurgeon's College



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PREFACE

With regard to historical, theological, philological, and textual matters relating to Cyril of Alexandria's *Glaphyra in Pentateuchum*, the reader is referred to the full introduction by Gregory K. Hillis and the preface by Nicholas P. Lunn at the beginning of volume 1.

In the preparation of this second volume, the partial translation of the *Glaphyra* on Exodus by Evie Zachariades-Holmberg (see select bibliography) was consulted. A comparison with the present translation, however, will reveal that there is little in the way of dependence.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AcT</i>	<i>Acta theologica</i>
AnBib	Analecta Biblica, Pontificio Istituto Biblico, Rome
<i>CCR</i>	<i>Coptic Church Review</i>
FOTC	The Fathers of the Church, Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NIV	New International Version
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
NKJV	New King James Version
NLT	New Living Translation
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OT	Old Testament
PG	Patrologia Graeca, ed. J.-P. Migne, Paris, 1857–66
PL	Patrologia Latina, ed. J.-P. Migne, Paris, 1878–90
<i>RA</i>	<i>Recherches augustinienes</i>
<i>VC</i>	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
Vg	Vulgate

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GLAPHYRA ON THE
PENTATEUCH, VOLUME 2

EXODUS THROUGH
DEUTERONOMY

BOOK EIGHT: EXODUS, PART 1

Concerning the birth of Moses

HAVING JUST concluded, as best as we were able, the book of Genesis with a great deal of attention to detail, and having done so “from strength to strength,” as we sing in the Psalms,¹ we did not, as they say, let the pen, well practiced in good and hard labor, have even a brief respite, but we persuaded it that it had to strive further. For, if God wills and grants the wisdom, we will now deal with the sections in Exodus that can be seen to have been omitted when we composed our moral exhortation.² It was then thought best to avoid lengthy discourse, as we wanted to show how we are to understand the manner of worship in spirit and in truth. For having delineated each of the sections that comprise the five books of Moses, and having first carefully considered the matter in them intended for our contemplation, we conveniently³ gathered together those things in some way necessary for moral guidance [388] and things that were especially profitable, in what I would say was the most appropriate order for each matter. Yet those things by means of which the mystery of Christ seems to some degree to be depicted in advance, albeit in shadows relating to the law, we reserved for the work to be written later. In regard to this I know, beloved Palladius, that you will also labor in prayer with us who have chosen to make such an effort. While the matter

1. Ps 84.7 (83.8 LXX). The Hebrew idiom present here may have the sense of “with great force,” or “with greater and greater force.”

2. Here Cyril is referring to his other work on the Pentateuch known as *De adoratione et cultu in spiritu et veritate*.

3. Or “seasonably,” “opportunistically.”

we have undertaken is at least possible, it might even become a little easier still if Christ should make a wider path for us in this instance also. For he himself is the way, and he is the door,⁴ and "in him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."⁵

In carrying out the writing of this book we shall leave out some passages and will not go through every section in successive order (for, as I said just now, many of the matters that we have decided not to include here will be found treated more explicitly in the other composition). Those things, however, that would appear to be helpful for the purpose at hand we shall examine with as much precision and in as much detail as circumstances permit, and come straight to the truth,

Since the aim of this book is to bring one to the redemption that comes through Christ, it is absolutely essential to show that the human race was seriously endangered at the beginning and was brought to the brink of the utmost wretchedness. For the message⁶ of divine help should come forth in this appropriate order, and not in any other way, for it says, "My strength is made perfect in weakness."⁷ I believe that it is necessary with regard to the most knowledgeable and esteemed physicians, if they are going to be admired at all for those things in which they are learned, that the sick person respecting whom there occurred the demonstration of their innate skillfulness should have first been exhibited.

2. So then, we may now note that because famine was at that time pressing upon the people of Israel, afflicting and overwhelming them in an unbearable manner, they left the land of Canaan to go to Egypt, being around seventy-five persons, as is recorded.⁸ As time passed, however, their race expanded into a multitude of a greater number, for it is written, *The people of Israel increased and multiplied, they became numerous and exceedingly⁹ powerful, and the land multiplied them abundantly.*¹⁰

4. Cf. Jn 14.6; 10.7.

5. Col 2.3.

6. Or "ground," in the sense of "basis," "rationale."

7. 2 Cor 12.9.

8. Cf. Gn 46.27; Ex 1.5.

9. Var. omit "exceedingly."

10. Ex 1.7.

Now because the man to whose lot it fell to rule the country of the Egyptians became wary at the increase in the number of the Hebrews, he made plans against them, and *he set taskmasters over them, that they might ill-treat them in their labors.*¹¹ And the way in which they were ill-treated was through being made to labor hard at digging and at making many bricks, without any recompense. Also they were made to build strong cities for Pharaoh, that is, cities constructed with towers, or which were so wide and long as to seem totally impregnable to others,¹² evidently on account of the large number of people living in them. These cities were Pithom, Rameses, and others.

The scheming of the tyrant, however, turned out contrary to his hopes. For it says that in being abased those who were suffering injury evidenced the greater preeminence, and they became more numerous. This was because God is inclined to benefit those who experience maltreatment in such an ungodly way at the hands of the one whose wont is to harm them.

So the tyrant, perceiving this, came up with another plot to add to their troubles. He ordered the midwives of the Jews that, if they were delivering the babies of women who were already in the pangs of giving birth, [389] they should strangle those babies they saw to be of male gender, but to let a female live. For there seemed to be no reason to be concerned about those who were weak and disinclined to war, who were prone to fearfulness, and who by the law of nature had been made feeble. But the midwives did not carry out such an impious act, and on this account were pleasing to God. So what did that sinful man do? He gave vent to his wrath and persuaded the Egyptians to behave in a shameful and profane manner. For Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, *“Every male that is born to the Hebrews throw into the river, but let every female live.”*¹³

3. The account that is being narrated may be paused at this point. And let us now, by way of bringing our minds into the deepest¹⁴ contemplations, say that as the thinking of man

11. Ex 1.11.

12. Here “others” apparently means “other cities.”

13. Ex 1.22.

14. Lit. “innermost.”

is thoroughly devoted to evil from his youth through the lack of good things from above, the whole race, one might say, was corrupted upon the earth, and a manner of famine caused the heavenly teachings to be consumed.¹⁵ We may surely also observe something just like this in the prodigal son, who is portrayed as a figure in a parable. He devoured the wealth received from his father in foreign parts, and desired to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating. In the same way, we hastened after the more earthly things, neglecting that which is better and the need to pursue those things that are more profitable, by means of which one could readily avoid missing out on the favor of heaven and be found richly blessed in one's relationship with God.

Therefore, since we had fallen away from everything that was able to maintain us in a state of well-being and of fellowship with God, we no longer deemed him who is both naturally and truly the Master to be our keeper. Rather, having given up the pious life in favor of the earth, as if it were holy, and having sunk down into the most shameful and unseemly life which to all intents and purposes lay in subjection to the devil, we have become like those who went down from Canaan into Egypt and came under the power of Pharaoh and the Egyptians. These latter, being devoted in an extraordinary manner to the worship of demons, and being well-suited to every form of vileness, also manifested in themselves, as in an image, Satan himself and those beings under him whom they considered gods. So they rejected the noblest sense of judgment and were afflicted by the mist and darkness that come from ignorance.

Since we were subject to a terrible and wicked master, namely Satan, we were worn out by the making of bricks and mortar, by which I mean things relating to the earth and the most abominable pursuits that are performed upon it, though not without great toil. For the diversions of this life, even though they may perhaps be activities that are without purpose, are not free from toil. Satan also appointed the unclean demons

15. Note that the Greek verbs translated as "was corrupted" and "be consumed" are imperfect. This verbal aspect denotes activity that is continual or habitual.

to be overseers, as it were, of the deeds done against those being wronged, because such matters are especially dear to him. These are the powers under his authority, which burden the minds of each of those upon the earth with diverse greedy passions, fearing, I suppose, that if they were in any way to allow the eye of the mind the space to turn towards God, they might set free the neck that is under Satan's yoke, for human nature is a great lover of freedom. And that [392] our meaningless diversions and our toiling in matters of the flesh, as well as our avid attention to things of a more earthly nature, are reckoned as glory and riches by the unclean demons¹⁶ and by Satan himself is shown figuratively through the raising up of cities for Pharaoh by the people of Israel, who were being worn down through the making of bricks and mortar. This is seen too in the fact that Satan makes the male, that is, the one inclined towards manliness, especially as it pertains to virtue, to be abominated, and also, in effect, drowns the one who is fit for battle by lowering him into the muddy waters of pleasure. Yet he welcomes the one who is weak and who, being helpless and unable to resist, submits to the yoke. This indicates very clearly the fact that it says the male should be cast into the waters, while the female should be allowed to live. For those things which are visible and manifest are figures of those which are less visible.

Therefore, seeing that right back from the times of our forefathers we had become diseased with sin and afflicted by the lack of goodness, it would seem that we wretched ones became yoked against our will with Satan, the ruler of wickedness, and we suffered those malicious taskmasters, the unclean demons. Our condition was now at the final extremity of all evil, and there would have been nothing missing of those things which bring wretchedness and hardship, had not God shown mercy, saved us, and set us free. And in what manner this was, we will come to learn through the related matters that follow. For we will set forth the things written respecting the divine Moses as a picture and a pattern of the salvation which comes through Christ.

4. *There was a certain man from the tribe of Levi, who took one of*

16. Var. "spirits."

the daughters of Levi to be his wife. She conceived and gave birth to a male child. Seeing that he was fine-looking, they hid him for three months. When they could no longer hide him, his mother took a basket¹⁷ and coated it with bitumen and pitch. Then she put the child in it and placed it in the marshy ground beside the river. His sister watched from a distance to find out what would happen to him.

Now Pharaoh's daughter came down to bathe in the river, and her maids walked beside the river. When she saw the basket in the marshy ground, she sent her maid and brought it up. Opening it she saw the child crying in the basket. Pharaoh's daughter had pity on him, and said, "This is one of the Hebrew children." Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Do you want me to call a nurse for you from the Hebrews so she can nurse the child for you?" And she said, "Go."

The young girl went and called the child's mother. Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take care of this child for me and nurse him for me, and I will give you wages." So the woman took the child and nursed him. When the child had grown up, she brought him in to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She gave him the name "Moses," saying, "I took him out of the water."¹⁸

As God the Father was merciful to those on earth, who were serving a profane tyrant and a most cruel brigand, he did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all, as it is written.¹⁹ For the Son, being in the same form [393] as God and equal to him, being of him and in him with respect to his nature, lowering himself into a state of emptiness, became one of us, and, as the wise evangelist John says, came to his own.²⁰ For, as he himself said in a certain passage, "I was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,"²¹ but his own did not receive him. Accordingly, he brought severe charges against them through the mouth of Isaiah, saying, "Hear, O heaven, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord has spoken. I have begotten sons and reared them, but they have rejected me. An ox knows its owner, and an ass its

17. The Greek noun *thibis* is derived from a transliteration of the Hebrew term for "ark" (*tēbā*).

18. Ex 2.1–10. The name "Moses" resembles the Hebrew word for to "draw out" (*māšā*).

19. Cf. Rom 8.32.

20. Cf. Jn 1.11.

21. Mt 15.24.

master's manger, but Israel does not know me, the people do not regard me."²²

Since, therefore, the race of Israel stumbled and did not recognize the one who by nature was their true Master, those who worshiped idols²³ were summoned to faith, and the profane and most abominable multitude of those who denied God came to acknowledge the Redeemer. This is what was proclaimed earlier through the mouth of the prophets: "I set watchmen over you who said, 'Give heed to the sound of the trumpet!' But they said, 'We will not give heed.' Therefore, the nations gave heed, and those that tended their flocks. Hear, O earth! Behold, I am bringing disasters upon this people, the fruit of their rebellion, because they have not given heed to my word, and they have rejected my law."²⁴

Note, therefore, that the mystery is plainly to be observed also in the matters regarding Moses, as I said just now. The divine Moses was of the tribe and bloodline of Levi. So too Emmanuel himself, being pure, guileless, and altogether holy,²⁵ was designated a high priest. This is so even though he is understood to be from the tribe of Judah, so that he might be believed to be also one worthy of praise and a king,²⁶ and that his holiness would not be of a fleshly kind, as was undoubtedly the case with the leaders of the Jews, but of God and of one who is king of all both in holiness and in glory.

There is, then, a figure in these fleshly matters, with the reality transcending the fleshly as a consequence. This reality is Christ, who, on account of the guilelessness of his deity, can be considered to be a newborn child, that is to say, he was a new creation.²⁷ For having put aside the state of growing old in corruption, we have been transferred into newness of life in him. So the baby was, as it were, a new creation. And that the

22. Is 1.2-3.

23. By this phrase and the ensuing "those who denied God," Cyril means the Gentiles.

24. Jer 6.17-19.

25. Cf. Heb 7.26.

26. Cyril is making a word-play on the name Judah, which means "praise." This is the tribe, of course, from which the kings of Judah originated.

27. Cf. 2 Cor 5.17.

newborn child is a symbol of guilelessness is also very easy to see, if one should care to adduce the words of the Savior. For on one occasion some young women desired to bring their infants that he might place his hands upon them, as it is written. But the disciples, thinking that a crowd was forming, kept them away. So Christ said to them, "Let the little children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."²⁸ Also, when there was once a dispute among the disciples about who would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, the wise evangelist tells us this: "Taking a child, he stood him among them, and said, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as these little children, you shall by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.'"²⁹ What it means for us to be converted and to desire to become like children, [396] the blessed Paul makes clear when he writes, "Brothers, do not be children in your thinking; rather, be infants with regard to evil, but in your thinking be mature."³⁰ It is evident, then, that Christ is represented as an infant on account of the guilelessness of his deity.

Furthermore, in the way the sacred Scriptures are set out in the divine economy Moses's father is passed over in silence. For it was in fact possible to say, *So-and-so*³¹ *took one of the daughters of Levi to be his wife*, yet it says, *a certain man*. This is because it indicates in an indirect manner that Christ was without a father according to the flesh, though there was the suspicion of a father, for he was thought to be the son of Joseph.³²

Now it says that the child³³ was *fine-looking*. For Christ is described as being, and actually is, "more fair in beauty than the sons of men."³⁴ Also in another verse the divine David says regarding him, "Gird your sword upon your thigh, O mighty one, in your beauty and in your comeliness."³⁵ One would not

28. Mt 19.13-14.

29. Mt 18.2-3; cf. Lk 9.47-48.

30. 1 Cor 14.20.

31. That is, Cyril states, a name could easily have been given in this place.

32. Cf. Lk 3.23.

33. Moses.

34. Ps 45.2 (44.3 LXX).

35. Ps 45.3 (44.4 LXX).

doubt that this beauty should be understood as lying in both the glory and the nature of the deity above all else. For one would not wish to confer upon Christ the glorious attributes of the flesh, and reckon them to be his glory. Far from it. For the whole mystery of the economy of his flesh exists in the emptying of himself and in his humility. In a certain place the prophet Isaiah writes concerning him, "And we saw him, yet he had no form or beauty. But his form was despicable, inferior to that of all the sons of men."³⁶ We are not saying that the word of the prophet denounces the glorious attributes of his deity, but rather it persuades us to understand that the things of the flesh, when compared to the glory of his deity, are seen to be worth nothing. The Son came in a form that was completely without comeliness. For though he was God in nature, he became one of us. Yet between these two is an immeasurable distance, and the human is incomparably inferior to God in its differences.

5. Note how, although Pharaoh had ordered that every male be included in his plot, the woman who gave birth to Moses hid him. Later she laid him down and enclosed him in a basket,³⁷ that is, in something that was covered, and then cast him into the marshy ground. Very soon, however, the daughter of the persecutor, finding the basket in the water, took it out, opened it, and found the infant crying. Understanding for sure that he was a Hebrew, she gave him back to the woman who had given him birth for her to feed him, promising her wages in return for the feedings.

What sort of meaning should we attribute to these words? Or what mystery is it necessary to observe here? Now before the coming of our Savior, the male was indeed subject to a plot upon the earth. Here we understand male to mean one with spiritual manliness, the fruits of which would be pleasing to God. Surely then, the male was in danger, because Satan was bringing down and drowning the male in worldly pleasures, as though in the mud and mire, the male being one who shuns weakness and womanly ways, with respect to character and manners that is.

For this reason, those inspired by the Spirit, who, I imag-

36. Is 53.2-3.

37. See n. 17 above.

ine, were astonished to see everyone becoming inclined to that which was improper, said, "They have all turned aside, they have become altogether useless; there is no one who does good, not even one."³⁸ For the whole of humankind were without any concern whatsoever for that which was good, because the [397] inventor of sin would not allow them to behave in a manly fashion.

Now when Emmanuel came to be with us, he was numbered among those subject to this plot. He was by nature the true male infant, that is, the one who did not know how to act in an unmanly fashion, for he did not show any weakness with respect to sin. At first he was unnoticed by the ruler of this age, for the child Moses was hidden. But when he grew older, the synagogue, which had given birth to him (for Christ had come from the Jews with regard to his flesh), being incited to murder by the designs of the devil, enclosed him in a tomb.

Of these things Moses was a clear figure, being laid down by the hand of his own mother in what was described as a basket, and who, moreover, was cast out.³⁹ For the synagogue of the Jews put Emmanuel at a distance from itself. But Pharaoh's daughter, that is, the church of the Gentiles, even though at one time it was her lot to have Satan as her father, found him at the side of the water, which may be interpreted as symbolizing the holy baptism through which and in which Christ is found, and she opened the basket. For the fact that he did not remain among the dead, but rather rose to life again, having trampled down death, and came out from the tomb, we have come to believe who through faith have found the one who experienced death on our account, that he might also obtain life for us.

Pharaoh's daughter found the child crying. We also light upon Christ, all but crying, as he relates the profanity of the Jews and the things that happened to him. For with great grief he says, "They pierced my hands and my feet, they counted all my bones. They watched and stared at me. They divided my garments among themselves, and cast lots for my clothing."⁴⁰

38. Ps 14:3 (13:3 LXX).

39. Or "exposed."

40. Ps 22:16–18 (21:17–19 LXX).

And in another passage he says, "They gave me gall for my food, and gave me vinegar to drink for my thirst."⁴¹

That Christ came from the Jews, the church of the Gentiles recognized and believed, for Pharaoh's daughter said, "*This is one of the Hebrew children.*" That, however, the synagogue of the Jews will eventually receive Christ from the Gentile church, and be initiated into the mystery relating to him, is readily shown by the fact that the one who gave birth to the child received him from the daughter of Pharaoh. For, while it was as though the synagogue of the Jews had put Jesus outside, casting him off in her disobedience, in the end times she will receive him, and be initiated into the mystery through the words⁴² of the church. And that this will not be an unprofitable matter, the synagogue herself is encouraged to believe with much hope. For observe how Pharaoh's daughter promised payment to the mother of Moses, who chose to take care of the child that came from her.

The birth of Moses, therefore, and those things relating to him would signify very clearly to those who are of sound mind the mystery of Christ, through whom and with whom be glory to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, now and always and to the unending ages.⁴³ Amen.

More concerning Moses

6. Having examined the birth of Moses we have, as we are able, shown plainly the mystery of Christ. The limited understanding given describes him with regard to the economy of the Incarnation [400] as a newborn babe on account of the guilelessness of his deity, his total incorruptibility, and complete integrity. This is also to say that a new creation came into being.

But now let us also explore another way in which Emmanuel is given form in Moses. For Christ is the end of the law⁴⁴ and the prophets.⁴⁵

41. Ps 69.21 (68.22 LXX).

42. Lit. "voices."

43. Var. omit "now and always and to the unending ages."

44. Cf. Rom 10.4.

45. Var. add "and every kind of inspired Scripture points him out to us."

Now it says, *It came about after much time had passed that Moses, having grown up, went out to his kinsmen, the people of Israel. Noting their suffering, he saw an Egyptian striking one of his Hebrew kinsmen.*⁴⁶ *So he smote the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.*

Going out on the next day, he saw two Hebrew men fighting. He said to the one who was in the wrong, "Why are you hitting your neighbor?" But the man said, "Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?" Then Moses was afraid, and thought, "If this is how it is, the matter has become known."

*Pharaoh heard about this, and sought to kill Moses. So Moses departed from the presence of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian. And when he came into the land of Midian, he sat down by a well. Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters, who looked after the sheep of Jethro their father.*⁴⁷ *They came and drew water until they had filled the troughs, so that they could water the sheep of Jethro their father. But some shepherds came and drove them away. So Moses got up and came to their rescue. He drew water for them, and watered their sheep.*

The girls came to Reuel their father. He said to them, "Why have you come back so soon today?" They said, "An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds, and drew water for us and watered our sheep." Then he said to his daughters, "So where is he? Why have you left the man behind? Invite him for something to eat."

*Moses stayed with the man, and he gave Zipporah his daughter to Moses as a wife. The woman conceived and gave birth to a son. Moses called his name Gershom,*⁴⁸ *saying, "I am a sojourner in a foreign land."*⁴⁹

Such are the matters concerning Moses. Our discourse will again consist of a contemplation of the inner meaning, while ascribing to the literal sense what is particularly appropriate to it. And whatever appears to be especially able to aid our spiritual explanations, this our discourse will bring around to the subject of the economy concerning Christ.

46. Var. add "of the people of Israel. Looking this way and that, he saw no one" (following Ex 2.11–12).

47. The Hebrew Masoretic text lacks "Jethro" in this sentence and the following, not using this name until Ex 3.1.

48. In Hebrew the name Gershom appears to mean "a sojourner there."

49. Ex 2.11–22.

7. We learned that when Moses had grown up, he *went out to his kinsmen*. Now the divine Paul is indeed correct when he writes, "When the fullness of time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law."⁵⁰ It is necessary, then, to understand how the manner of the sending indicated here should be suitably interpreted and what is meant by going out. For when the Word from God the Father became one of us, that is, a human being, should we not allow that he, in effect, *went out*? And shall we not say it to be true that he came to be outside of the glory befitting God [401], for although he was rich he became poor,⁵¹ and brought himself down through emptying himself? And so, when the divine economy was eventually completed, and when he was about to return to the Father to take his seat with him, and to ascend the highest of thrones, he said, "Father, glorify me with the glory which I had with you before the world was."⁵²

Yet the Lord of heaven and earth, who as God was essentially attributed with power over all, when he took on the form of a servant did not in any way leave behind what was his own. And he, "in whom we live and move and have our being,"⁵³ though he was seen naked among us and among the tombs, and though he came back to life again as the one who is life, could not be thought, even for a moment, to have separated himself from what especially befits him. How could one doubt this? He went out then to his kinsmen, that is, to the people of Israel, for theirs were the promises, theirs were the fathers to whom the promises had been made. For this reason he said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."⁵⁴ As, however, they were suffering terrible and truly grievous oppression (for Satan was attacking them so as to crush them), he looked to set them free and deliver them from all hardship. Having in a way killed the one who wished to do them wrong, he hid him in the ground, that is, he placed him in those parts under the earth,

50. Gal 4.4.

51. Cf. 2 Cor 8.9.

52. Jn 17.5.

53. Acts 17.28.

54. Mt 15.24.

shutting him up in Hades. This, I say, is the meaning of hiding the dead Egyptian in the sand. That the mass of unclean and God-hating⁵⁵ demons were driven together into Hades by the ineffable power of our Savior, and were condemned to dwell in the abyss, one might very readily learn from the gospel readings. "For the demons," it says, "begged him not to order them to depart into the abyss."⁵⁶ As a great multitude of them had already been sent there beforehand, those that remained came to him and begged him that they might be spared from being condemned along with those others. That they were being tormented in that they were suffering punishment for their cruelty towards us, one may readily see, if one cares to, when we hear them crying out, "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to torment us before the time?"⁵⁷

So then, since Christ beheld the Egyptian oppressing those upon the earth, which was intolerable, he hid him in Hades. Joshua, who became the leader after Moses and brought the people of Israel across the Jordan, also enacted the same thing by way of shadows and types when he shut up the five kings of the Amorites in a cave.⁵⁸ The type indirectly foreshows to us that, after life under the law, Emmanuel, having been declared king over us, would seal up the leaders of the demons, just as if in a deep cave in the remotest recesses under the earth.

Now when he who was oppressing and afflicting had been done away with, on the next day, it says, as two Hebrews were fighting, Moses stood in the middle as an arbitrator and mediator of peace for those who opposed each other in an unfriendly manner. He showed himself hostile to the one who wished to beat up his fellow Hebrew, and said to him, "*Why are you hitting your neighbor?*" But that man said to him, "*Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill [404] me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?*" For when Emmanuel had shut up Satan in Hades, he showed himself to the people of Israel as an arbitrator of righteousness and a teacher of mutual affection, instruct-

55. Or "demons hated by God."

56. Lk 8.31.

57. Mt 8.29; Lk 4.34.

58. Cf. Jos 10.17-19.

ing them to seek after the close bonds of love, and to regard nothing as better than peace and harmony. For this reason, he also said, "My peace I give you."⁵⁹ But they, although they ought to have commended what he was proposing, and to have admired the mediator, the provider of peace, and the lord of love, who was holding forth the most noble of teachings, they treated him with immeasurable ungodliness. For they did not consider him their leader, even though the voice of the psalmist clearly said, "I have been appointed king by him upon Zion, his holy hill."⁶⁰ Rather, going beyond all manner of shamelessness, they opposed him in a harsh and impious manner, saying at one time, "Who gave you this authority?"⁶¹ and at another, "We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he is from."⁶² Also, the things by means of which they were being saved, they marked down as a cause for accusation, and they most foolishly disparaged the manner of help that was being offered.

The divine Moses was accused of slaying the Egyptian, even though he had been afflicting and oppressing the multitude of the Hebrews, and wearying them through unbearably harsh treatment. So Christ, having buried the evil demons in the abyss, and having removed them against their will from their dominion over us by sending them out from their hosts, even though he ought to have been admired for this, did not escape the words of those whose habit it was to reproach others. For, by taking the working of miracles as a cause of accusation, they dared to say, "This man does not cast out demons except by Beelzebul, the ruler of demons."⁶³

Note that Moses, looking this way and that, and seeing no one, hid the dead Egyptian in the sand. Then, as he departed, he counseled the kinsmen of his race to seek peace. For the Lord makes war against Amalek, but with a hidden hand, as

59. Jn 14.27.

60. Ps 2.6.

61. Mt 21.23.

62. Jn 9.29.

63. Mt 12.24.

it is written;⁶⁴ and without any of those upon the earth seeing, the most secret things have been administered through Christ. For how or when the hordes of demons were condemned and ordered to dwell in the abyss, who upon the earth could know?

So then, having driven Satan into Hades, and having delivered those upon the earth from his harsh treatment, Christ called them to the knowledge of virtue. He himself says this very clearly in a certain passage: "Or how can one enter the house of the strong man and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man, and then he may plunder his house?"⁶⁵ For Christ, having first bound the strong man, which is Satan, through their faith transfers his goods to himself, that is, those who were formerly acting under Satan's direction and were accounted worthless.

As, however, Christ was impiously mocked over those things for which it was reasonable and proper for him to be marveled at, he necessarily removed himself. So he left Judea, where he had been born according to the flesh, though in reality, as the Word, he was not a Jew, but was [405] from heaven above, from the Father. In just the same way, the divine Moses was born in Egypt, a Hebrew of Hebrews, having a noble and holy root in his father. Yet, since those of his own race reproached him, being extremely slanderous of the things he had done for them, he finally departed for Midian and came to settle in the land of foreigners. Then, when he had sat down by the well, he lent his assistance to the daughters of Jethro, who were seven in number, and who, while tending their father's flocks, brought the thirsty animals to the watering troughs. And although they had already drawn water with a good deal of effort, some of the goat herders got the better of them. But Moses contended with them and overcame them, and drawing water with his own hands, he watered their sheep, as it is written.

We should, then, take Jethro, who was priest of the Midianites, as standing for this world. He was not serving⁶⁶ him who is

64. Ex 17.16 LXX reads, "with a secret hand the Lord wages war upon Amalek to all generations."

65. Mt 12.29.

66. Or "worshiping."

truly God in nature, but rather those things created by the Creator and Maker, or objects made out of stone, the skilled work of craftsmen. For the world has fallen into deception, worshipping demons and not God. Now the name Jethro is to be understood as meaning “excess” or “superfluous.”⁶⁷ And such is the world, which is altogether superfluous. For those who choose to mind the things of the world surely fail to accomplish anything that is needful, but rather they become intoxicated with vain distractions and they plunge themselves, as it were, into useless pleasures. It cannot be doubted that for those who wish to live correctly the things of the flesh are superfluous, and to fix one’s mind on the things in the world makes one fail to pursue that which is useful and necessary, as it is truly the case that “the mind of the flesh is hostile toward God,”⁶⁸ and the one who sets his mind on the things of the world “makes himself an enemy of God.”⁶⁹ Therefore, to choose to mind worldly things is truly superfluous, and the world itself is superfluous. For in a certain passage Christ said, “What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”⁷⁰

8. Moses, then, removed himself from the land of the Egyptians to go to Midian in the same way that Christ went from Judea into Galilee.

And note that the daughter of Levi who gave birth to sacred Moses was one, while the daughters of Jethro the Midianite were more, namely seven, in number. For one is the multitude of the Jews from which Jesus was born according to the flesh, which is found in a figure with respect to Moses. The many, however, are the daughters of the world, namely the masses of the Gentiles who are found to dwell in it. So after Christ had left the synagogue from which he had been born according to the flesh, he turned to the numerous masses of the Gentiles, who were oppressed by wicked shepherds, that is, the rulers of this world, and he saved them.

67. This is a reasonable explanation of the Hebrew form of the name.

68. Rom 8.7.

69. Jas 4.4.

70. Mt 16.26.

To the manner of the oppression, however, let us now add a discussion of the manner of the help given. It is customary of divine Scripture to compare our innate knowledge of God, by which we are led in every action, to a cistern of water within us. For the knowledge of everything that is good and the comprehension of the glory of God, albeit dimly as in a mirror,⁷¹ flows forth as though from a fountain in our mind. [408] Therefore, God brought accusations against those who did not care to love him, and who were profanely inclined to fix their devotion upon demons, and he said through the mouth of Jeremiah, "Heaven was astounded at this, and the earth trembled exceedingly, says the Lord. For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and they have dug for themselves broken cisterns, which will not be able to hold water."⁷² False worship is like a broken cistern, for one could not draw from it the word which has the power to give life, but the perfect knowledge of God is truly a fountain of life.

The cistern, then, would be a picture of our innate knowledge. Now, so long as we have used our mind for the right knowledge of God, which is unforced, we shall arrive directly at the truth. But if someone, who by the deceit of demons is trying to get the better of us, should turn our minds towards his opinions, he would be using his efforts for those demons. This, I believe, is the figurative meaning of Jethro's daughters drawing water, while those who wished to take advantage of them sought to take it by force. We say that those who have been deceived are to be found in such sort of infirmities, as their innate knowledge is inclined towards that which has no beauty, that is, towards error and what is of use to demons. But Christ came to give help, for he frightened off the sinful false shepherds and gave us the living water to drink, which is his divine and heavenly preaching. He therefore said, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink."⁷³

Let us take Jethro, then, as representing the world, which is filled with excess and vanity. The seven daughters we say are

71. Cf. 1 Cor 13.12.

72. Jer 2.13.

73. Jn 7.37.

the masses of the nations all over, each of Jethro's daughters signifying a multitude. The evil and extremely violent shepherds may be reasonably understood as the hordes of demons. And the one who comes to our aid is Christ, who makes us drink abundantly from the divine springs.

When the girls had escaped the harsh treatment of the profane shepherds, they went back home to their father Reuel, which is to say, Jethro. And when he asked them the reason why they had come back earlier than usual, they straightaway told him how Moses had helped them. He immediately welcomed the man into his home, and gave him Zipporah as a wife, the most prominent and most comely of his daughters, and she gave birth to Gershom. For when Christ helped the mass of nations in the world, it became known to them that, since those of them who had been instructed in the mysteries had been saved through him, he was able both to come to their aid and to deliver them readily from the hand of those who wished to do them harm.

Furthermore, he is pleased to join himself to them, as Reuel did with the most sacred Moses. This happened by way of a marital union, when he presented to him as a most comely bride the church of the Gentiles, which is what is to be understood by Zipporah. For the name means "visitation" or "beautiful," and also "free gift of breath."⁷⁴ For the rising sun from on high visited her who was [409] truly preeminent and beautiful, namely the church, and freely gave her the heavenly gift of his own breath, by which is meant the partaking of the Holy Spirit. And for him she gave birth to Gershom, meaning the people who are truly sojourners. For those who have been sealed by the divine Spirit, who are deemed worthy of visitation from above, and who have been fashioned according to the beauty of the Son, are indeed sojourners in this world. And it would be especially fitting for them to cry out and say, "Here we have no lasting city, but we look for the one that is to come, of which the designer and builder is God."⁷⁵ For although they walk upon the earth, they live as citizens of heaven, and do not in the least

74. Zipporah in Hebrew in fact means "bird."

75. Heb 13.14; 11.10.

strive after those things that are in this world, but earnestly lay claim to the things of the age to come. For they know how, through a truly refined and well-rounded life, they are to follow Christ, who on our account and as one of us lived as a sojourner in this world. For he took no thought for the things of this world, far from it, but rather he exhibited to us the pattern of an upright life that transcends this world.

Observe how the sacred Scripture, very suitably to the divine economy, named the father of the seven girls Jethro before Moses came to their aid, but after that Reuel. Jethro means “excess,” that is to say, “superfluous,” just as I said above, while Reuel means “shepherding of God.”⁷⁶ I will make use of this word because it is helpful. We said that we assign to this man the role of representing the world, for the distractions that are in the world are truly superfluous and vain. Now the group of young women was in such a predicament before they were helped by Christ. But once they had been rescued from mistreatment and put beyond the reach of the profane shepherds, then the man was renamed Reuel, the “flock of God” or the “shepherding of God,” according to how the import of the word is to be interpreted. For he placed himself under the care of the chief shepherd of all, who is Christ, through whom and with whom be glory to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

Concerning the vision of Moses in the bush

The blessed prophets, inasmuch as they were men moved by the Spirit, gave considerable attention to those things pertaining to ourselves, and undertook a precise examination of such matters. They exhorted that the Word of God should be held forth to those upon the earth as a helper and assistant, ascribing to him alone the ability, in that he was God, to save those who had reached the extremity of evils. For the prophets were instructors in the most noble of things, and were wise and prudent in showing forth the way of salvation. And as they did not

76. This is a possible meaning of the name.

lack any of those things that are to be commended, were they not rightfully admired?

Nevertheless, it was not for these men to drive off Satan, who exercised tyranny over us. Nor was it theirs to drive away the profane hordes of demons who in many different ways were plundering us wretched ones, and who were making us in effect like those conquered by the spear, and who, by weighing us down with a yoke of slavery, impiously compelled us to think and to do what seemed good to them. Like terrible and unrelenting exactors of tribute, they demanded that we set before them things for their service, and as if we were like those under obligation, they ordered us to defile ourselves with earthly pursuits, and therefore to give thought only for fleshly concerns.

So then, [412] it was the glorious accomplishment of the ineffable Being to shake off the proud and profane cruelty of the devil, and to deliver those on the earth from the most noxious and hateful slavery, and to show them henceforth to be workers of virtue. And through the sacred Scriptures we know for certain that this would eventually be that very great and much-desired good for those upon the earth, when the Only-Begotten came down, emptying himself and becoming a man.

Now the text reads as follows: *In those days, after some time, the king of Egypt died; and the children of Israel groaned because of their labors, and they cried out, and their cry because of their labors went up to God. And God heard their groaning, and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God looked upon the children of Israel and was made known to them.*⁷⁷ The Egyptians indeed oppressed the people of Israel, casting upon them the yoke of compulsory servitude, and placing over them harsh and merciless taskmasters who made their life grievous, as it is written.⁷⁸ Those wretched ones who were distressed by such harsh treatment, in crying out and lamenting, earnestly entreated that they should be found worthy to receive mercy from above. And God visited them, and, it says, *he looked upon the children of Israel and was made known to them.*

So when we are ignorant of God, then we will also become

77. Ex 2.23–25.

78. Cf. Ex 1.11.

subject to those who would do us harm. We roll ourselves in the mire of sin, with the unclean demons as harsh and cruel masters over such a state of affairs. Yet when God is known, the grace of liberty will always follow.

These events, however, were enacted with a figurative meaning, and were recorded for our admonition, as it is written.⁷⁹ And the figure is related to that one nation of the race of Israel. It very plainly teaches us that the purpose of the devil and the unclean spirits is to compel forcefully those upon the earth to toil over vain pursuits and to perform works of the flesh, lest, having a mind that is at leisure and able to look to heavenly things, they should come to know the God of all. For in doing this they would also be directed to what is pleasing to him and be inclined to submit to the yoke of his service.

Now as there exists within human nature the love of freedom, there are times when we do not approve of the passions, and often, during those brief moments of sanity, we loathe the disagreeable nature of fleshly pleasures. We long for God's help from above, and we cry out endlessly against the unwilling servitude. This, in my opinion, is the groaning to God of the children of Israel.

So as God is good, he sent the Son from heaven as our Savior and Redeemer, who became like us, that is, a man. And once again the sacred Scripture foreshowed this matter to us in a figure, for it reads as follows: *Now Moses was tending the sheep of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the sheep into the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush, and he saw that the bush [413] was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. Moses said, "I will go near and see this great sight, why the bush is not consumed." When the Lord saw that he was coming near to look, the Lord called him from the bush, saying, "Moses, Moses." And he said, "What is it?" He said, "Do not come near. Remove your sandals from your feet, because the place where you are standing is holy ground." And he said to him, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Then Moses turned his face away, for he was afraid to look upon God.*⁸⁰

79. Cf. 1 Cor 10.11.

80. Ex 3.1-6.

According to the words of the prophet, God gave the law to be our help, for with respect to the divine economy he showed forth in advance that Moses was a tutor.⁸¹ He established the shadow to be a means, in effect, of manifesting more perfect things, while the reality would appear in its own time. And with the mystery of Christ, which is what was expressly being taught through this vision, the period of the tutor came to an end. For the bush was a plant having the form of a shrub that was without fruit, and because of its thorns there was room for little else. And it was encompassed in flame, for a holy angel in the form of fire was within it.⁸² The flame rose up high, yet it did absolutely no harm to the bush in which it appeared. What was happening was truly wonderful and beyond all words. The fire existed together with the thorns and encompassed the bush with the gentlest embrace, to all intents and purposes neglecting its own innate power, and resided within that which could quite readily have been destroyed by it.

The divine Moses therefore lowered his face. What was the reason for this? The sacred Scripture compares the divine nature⁸³ to fire, because it is all-powerful and is easily able to overcome everything, while it compares humans upon the earth to trees and grass in the field. Accordingly, it says, "Our God is a consuming fire,"⁸⁴ and also, "As for man, his days are like grass; like the flower of the field, so he flourishes."⁸⁵

Now just as fire cannot be endured by thorns, so also deity cannot be endured by humanity. Yet in Christ it happened that the deity became endurable. For "in him all the fullness of deity dwelt bodily," as the wise Paul testified.⁸⁶ The one who dwells in unapproachable light,⁸⁷ namely God, took up his residence in the temple that came forth from the Virgin. He lowered himself into a state of gentleness that was to be marveled at, as if he were restraining the absolute force of his own nature,

81. Cf. Gal 3.24.

82. Or, "occupied it."

83. Or "Being."

84. Dt 4.24; Heb 12.29.

85. Ps 103.15 (102.15 LXX).

86. Col 2.9.

87. 1 Tm 6.16.

so that he might be circumscribed, just as the fire did in fact restrain itself with the thorns.

So the fire in the bush, which kept the wood completely unharmed, indicates in a figure that what had become perishable⁸⁸ in its nature, that is, the flesh, Christ rendered more excellent than its perishable state. Since the Word of God was by nature life, how can one doubt that he imparted life to his own temple, and rendered it imperishable and stronger than death?

The fire, then, spared the thorns, and to the puny and extremely feeble wood the flame became enduring. For, as I said, deity was circumscribed in humanity. This is the mystery that came to be in Christ. The Word of God came to dwell among us, not seeking retribution, [416] nor inflicting punishment, but encompassing us in the most kind and gentle embrace. For as he himself said in a certain place, "God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him."⁸⁹

So then, although the flame enveloped it, the bush was not consumed. Likewise we were not punished for the sins we had committed, as I just said, but rather Christ encompassed us in light through the Holy Spirit, and through the Spirit he is within us, and in him we cry, "Abba, Father."⁹⁰

Having lowered his face, the blessed Moses continued by saying, "*I will go near and see this great sight, why the bush is not consumed.*" But the blessed angel kept him away from the presence of God, and immediately said, "*Do not come near. Remove the sandals from your feet, because the place where you are standing is holy ground.*" He calls the place where the bush was, the waterless desert which brings forth thorns, "*holy ground.*" So every place where Christ may be is holy. And he does indeed very much appear in the desert, a figure for the church of the Gentiles, to which the sacred word says, "Rejoice, O thirsty desert; let the wilderness be glad, and may it blossom forth like the lily."⁹¹ Also in a certain passage God promised that he would make the des-

88. Or "corrupted."

89. Jn 3.17. It is not evident that Christ spoke these words himself.

90. Cf. Rom 8.15.

91. Is 35.1.

ert into watery ground, and the thirsty land into watercourses.⁹² For the grace of the Savior has abounded towards us who have been called out of the nations, and like some river overflowing with streams of heavenly water it gives us an abundance to drink. This is what the divine David says to us: "He turned rivers into a desert, and a fruitful land into a salty wasteland, because of the evildoing of those who dwell in it."⁹³ So then, the bush was in the desert, and the ground that contained it was holy and sacred to God.

Now as Moses was approaching the bush, he was stopped and ordered to remove the sandals from his feet. This matter symbolizes death and corruption, since every sandal is the remains of a living creature that has died and suffered corruption. So for those under the law and under the ministration of its tutorship, Christ is unapproachable. It is necessary, then, first to wash away the defilement and scrub off the dirt of sin. Yet it is impossible for the blood of bulls to take away sin.⁹⁴ For no one is justified by the law. But where sin has not yet been eradicated, corruption needs must prevail and death still have power over those who are defiled.

Therefore, whoever desires to see the mystery of Christ must lay aside the ministration existing in types and shadows, which has mastery over neither corruption nor sin. Then he will come to understand and will enter into the holy ground, which is the church. Now the fact that those who do not turn away from the ministration according to the law are under the power of corruption, Christ himself explains when he says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you have no life in you."⁹⁵

So this was the mystery, which was not found anywhere among those under the law, but among those who have accepted the faith, who are justified in Christ, and who have been enriched through the teaching that is better than that of the law, that is to say, gospel teaching. Those [417], then, who have

92. Cf. Is 41.18.

93. Ps 107.33-34 (106.33-34 LXX).

94. Cf. Heb 10.4.

95. Jn 6.53.

not yet been relieved of their burden through coming to faith are under the power of corruption, and by reason of the law are under the dominion of the source⁹⁶ of death, namely sin. Such are far from Christ. But if they would wish to loosen their sandals, that is to say, to remove the state of corruption, which is powerless to bring about justification, and if they would wish to draw near to the grace which truly gives life, then they will draw near to him who justifies the ungodly, which is Christ, through whom and with whom be glory to the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

96. Lit. "mother."

BOOK NINE: EXODUS, PART 2

Concerning the sacrifice of the lamb



HAT IT IS by Christ alone that we escape the power of death—as the wise disciple described to us when he said, “There is no name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved”¹—one may learn, if one cares to, by numerous different means. For in the inspired Scripture many thousands of wonderful and manifest images brightly reflect the power of the mystery. So in what follows we shall now gather and make known what is useful for this purpose.

Moses and Aaron came before Pharaoh and expressly stated, *“Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Let my people go that they may celebrate a feast to me in the wilderness.”* Pharaoh said, *“And who is he that I should obey his voice by letting the people of Israel go? I do not know the Lord, and I will not let Israel go.”* They said to him, *“The God of the Hebrews has called us. We shall therefore go a three-day journey² so that we may sacrifice to our God; otherwise, death or violence will come upon us.”* Then the king of Egypt said to them, *“Why, Moses and Aaron, do you turn my people aside from their work? Each of you, get back to your work.”³*

The witless Pharaoh, filled with a devilish insanity, said he did not know who the God of the Hebrews was. When, however, the country of the Egyptians was devastated by great and grievous plagues and was soon brought to ruin, when the waters were turned into blood, and locusts and hail were brought

1. Acts 4.12. Cyril’s wording is inexact.

2. Var. add “into the desert”; as Ex 5.3.

3. Ex 5.1–4.

upon the land, when gnats and frogs infested it, and darkness fell upon it for three days, he only then promised to release them, though not willingly. But Pharaoh was stubborn, and afterwards he again became malevolent and hardened, and so it was altogether unthinkable for him to choose to release Israel from such a long servitude.

Then God visited punishment upon the firstborn of the Egyptians, and let loose the Destroyer against them. But as it was [420] necessary that those chosen in love on account of their forefathers⁴ should not perish along with that ungodly people, God instituted a type in the law of the Passover, and he gave special instructions that the mystery of the wrath of Christ should be enacted ahead of time. It can also be understood from this how it is impossible that death should be abolished through Moses or the law. Rather it is the precious blood of Christ that turns the Destroyer aside and delivers from destruction those who have been consecrated, for he is life from life, and the God of all, as he is God of God.

This, then, is what the sacred Scripture states: *And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, "This month is to be the beginning of your months; it is the first of the months of the year for you. Speak to all the congregation of Israel and say, 'On the tenth day of this month let each man take a lamb, according to their fathers' households, a lamb for each household. If those in the house are few, so that they are not enough for the lamb, the neighbor who lives next to him shall partake with them.'"*⁵

Having prescribed the need to take a lamb, he then gives further instructions about what kind of sacrificial animal would be suitable, and when and how the rite had to be performed. *"Your lamb,"* it says, *"shall be perfect and without blemish, one year old,"*⁶ *and you shall take it from the lambs or the kids. It shall be kept with you until the fourteenth day of this month; and the whole multitude of the congregation of the people of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight.*⁷ *They shall*

4. Var. "necessary that Israel, those chosen in love on account of their forefathers to be enrolled for a share in those things being contemplated . . ."

5. Ex 12.1-4.

6. Cyril omits from the citation the fact that the lamb was also to be a "male." He mentions it later; see p. 36 below.

7. Lit. "towards the evening."

*take some of the blood and put it upon the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat them. That night they shall eat the flesh roasted in fire, and they shall eat unleavened bread with bitter herbs. You shall not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted in fire, the head with the legs and the entrails. Do not leave any of it until the morning, and do not break any of its bones. Whatever remains of it until the morning you shall burn with fire.”*⁸

To these matters the Lawgiver then adds more, explaining what kind of dress was appropriate for the participants, and what manner should accompany those who had prepared themselves to participate in this most sacred communal feast. For it says, *“Thus you shall eat it: let your loins be girded, let your shoes be on your feet, and your staffs in your hands; and you shall eat it with haste, for it is the Lord’s Passover.”*⁹

The way in which the slaying of the lamb would benefit the people of Israel is very clearly revealed: *“And I will pass through the land of Egypt, and I will strike every firstborn, both human beings and animals; on all the gods of the Egyptians I will execute judgment. I am the Lord. And the blood will be a sign for you upon the houses where you are. I will see the blood and I will protect you, and there will not be any plague upon you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.”*¹⁰

Then after other things it also says, *“For seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and from the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses.”*¹¹ Having prescribed the punishment of one who transgresses this command, it further says, *“And the first day shall be called holy, and the seventh day shall be a holy convocation for you.”*¹²

This, then, is what the divine word contains. So going through it again bit by bit, [421] we shall endeavor to assign a suitable interpretation to each part, bringing forth from what is variously indicated the import in relation to Christ himself.

2. Now the time of this ritual is defined as being at the beginning of the year, in the first month. So Christ is the begin-

8. Ex 12.5–10.

9. Ex 12.11.

10. Ex 12.12–13.

11. Ex 12.15.

12. Ex 12.16.

ning of all things,¹³ for he is not of recent origin on account of his generation from God the Father before the ages. And as the festival was in the month of new growth,¹⁴ he himself sanctifies throughout all time, from the beginning until the end. For indeed "the old things have passed away," in accordance with the words of the blessed Paul, "behold, all things have become new."¹⁵ So too in Christ, human nature was restored to how it was in the beginning.

These instructions were enjoined upon the people of Israel while they were still slaves, acting under tyrannical power, for they were still held by the Egyptians. The text is also a figurative representation¹⁶ that in no other way can the soul of man escape sin to become free, nor flee the oppression of the devil and be removed from the way of life in the world to enter the heavenly city, except through the fellowship and benevolence of Christ. So it was said by him to the senseless Jews: "Truly, truly, I say to you, that everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin. The slave does not remain in the house for ever; the son does remain for ever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."¹⁷ And again: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you have no life in you."¹⁸ Of this life the promised land, to which they hastened after leaving Egypt, may suitably be interpreted as a figure.

Now the lamb was taken on the tenth day of the month and kept until the fourteenth day, so that it might be slain at twilight. And, one might perhaps ask, why was this so? The reason is actually a profound one. For tell me why it is that he forbade the lamb to be taken on the first day of the month. And what induced God to legislate that the victim should be kept for five days and that the ritual be performed at twilight? For we find that the number of days beginning from the tenth¹⁹ was five.

13. Var. add "and is at the beginning of all things."

14. Cf. Ex 13.4 LXX. The Hebrew says "in the month of Abib." The name "Abib" seems to have connotations of "new growth" or "freshness."

15. 2 Cor 5.17.

16. Var. add "to us."

17. Jn 8.34-36.

18. Jn 6.53.

19. Var. add "and continuing until the fourteenth." Cyril's computation of the number of the days is, of course, inclusive.

So then, that the lamb was not taken on the first day of the month but on the tenth seems to indicate that a long period of time had gone before, and that there were certain long ages before ours, throughout which God always was, and is, and shall be. Then this next age, which is ours, comes in immediately afterwards, as though by way of a five-day period as just stated, being an age divided into five periods of time. This matter being discussed is explained to us especially well by the Savior's parable in this manner: "The kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. Having agreed with the laborers on a denarius for the day's work, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out around the third hour, he saw others in the market place standing idle, and also to those he said, 'You too go into my vineyard, and whatever is fair I will give you.' So they went. Then again [424] around the sixth and ninth hours he did the same. When he went out around the eleventh hour, he found others standing there, and said to them, 'Why have you stood here idle the whole day?' They said to him, 'Nobody has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into my vineyard.'" ²⁰

Can you see here most plainly and distinctly all the five times into which our age is divided? The first we reckon to be the time when our ancestor Adam was still in paradise. After that the second was seen as being like "the third hour," during which there were Noah and those with him. The third was like "the sixth hour," in which the God of all called Abraham to a knowledge of the truth. The fourth was like "the ninth hour," namely the time of Moses and the prophets. "Around the eleventh hour," that is, the fifth time, was when the day was drawing to a close, which was like Christ bringing to an end the age that then was and when he hired the Gentiles who were called to a knowledge not had by any other in the times that had passed before then. Therefore, more so than all others, those who came last could say, "Nobody has hired us."

So then, the lamb was taken on the first day of a five-day period, being the tenth day of the month, which was a figure of the beginning of the age. It was kept until the end of the time

20. Mt 20.1-7.

period, namely the fourteenth day, when it was slain at twilight. This was so that you might further understand how the mystery of Christ is neither something new nor something recent, but it was held in the foreknowledge of the Father, even from the very foundation of the world. So Christ died for us in the latter times of the world, when the spiritual, divine light was not yet shining, when the earth was still submerged in the darkness of ignorance, and when the powers of this dark world were polluting²¹ the hearts of all with their deceits. Therefore, when he was among us, the Savior said, "I am the light of the world."²² The saints too are called lights in the world, since they hold fast to the word of life.²³ So it also says to those who truly give heed, "you are the light of the world,"²⁴ on account of their being able to shine forth in the darkness.

You will also be amazed when you discover there to be another mystical aspect of the divine economy in this matter. For the lamb is slain on the fourteenth day of the month, when the cycle of the moon reaches the full extent of its glory. Though it illuminates the world, as it were, with a counterfeit form of light, it nevertheless soon begins to decline, and the dignity and beauty that it possesses of necessity then diminish. You may here understand, being led by the figure and shadow that this matter presents to an apprehension of the most true things, that the ruler of the night, namely the devil, depicted in a figure by means of the moon (for the moon was appointed to rule the night),²⁵ was glorified throughout all the world and, having put the wisdom of the world as a counterfeit light into the hearts of those who were being deceived, [425] he exerted the fullest degree of his glory. Then Christ, the true Lamb that takes away the sin of the world, died on our account and for our sake, and brought the glory of the devil to an end. For it was necessary that it should soon cease and be expended, that the multitude of the nations should then be urged to rise up to

21. Var. "darkening."

22. Jn 8.12.

23. Cf. Phil 2.15-16.

24. Mt 5.14.

25. Cf. Gn 1.16.

enjoy peace and love toward God through conversion and faith. And this is what was sung long ago in the Psalms concerning Christ: "In his days righteousness will dawn,²⁶ and abundance of peace until the moon be done away with."²⁷ For righteousness dawned in the days of Christ through faith, and an abundance of peace through turning to God. Together with this, the ruler of the night, the devil, was also done away with. But note how it does not simply say that the moon was done away with, but rather that it is done away with *in return*. For as the devil first did away with man, it is surely wholly evident that the devil was then done away with in return.²⁸

So "*let each man take a lamb*," it says, "*according to their households*." For a complete²⁹ Christ dwells in each one through their partaking of the Holy Spirit, and he is not divided, as Paul states.³⁰ Yet, it says, if there are too few so as not to be enough for a lamb, their neighbors who live near them will assist them. For those not having in themselves alone the ability to understand the complete mystery of Christ, or who are not sufficient to comprehend him on account of the weakness of their minds, these will also partake, having those of the same faith as fellow-workers and helpers. Through admonishing one another from time to time we are able to ascend to greater contemplations. So that wise eunuch, for instance, inquired of Philip when he heard the prophecy about Christ, saying, "Please tell me whom the prophet is talking about. Is it himself or someone else?"³¹ You see how, in receiving the help of a neighbor (for all of us who hold to the one common word of faith are near to one another), through his inquiry he was then shown to be a partaker of the spiritual lamb. For he was also worthy to be baptized immediately, and he was indeed so baptized.

Now it says, "*Let the lamb be perfect*," for in Christ there were

26. *anatelei*, "dawn," "rise up," "spring up."

27. Ps 72.7 (71.7 LXX).

28. Cyril is stressing the fact that the Greek verb in the psalm citation is not merely *anairethêsesthai*, but *antanairêthêsesthai*, the addition of the prefix *anti*-giving the sense of "in return," that is, something done back.

29. *teleios*, "full," "perfect."

30. Cf. 1 Cor 1.13.

31. Acts 8.34.

all the proper marks of deity. Yet the Lawgiver also declared, "*Let it be a male.*" Christ himself was and is likewise male, he who planted within all of us the seeds of divine knowledge, as though we were a desirable land. So, as it is contained in the prophetic word, he makes humanity perfect for God the Father through the gospel teachings.³²

In addition to this, the Passover was to be kept annually at its appointed time, so that a year would not be whole or would still remain incomplete without it. This was also the case because this most divine feast that relates to suffering would be celebrated on a yearly basis by those who obtain good things from that suffering.³³

It says it should be taken "*from the lambs or from the kids.*" The lamb is understood by the law to be a victim that is pure and without blemish, while the kind of animal taken from the kids is always offered for the sake of sins at the altar. [428] This same thing you shall find in Christ also. For he himself was, as it were, a sacrificial victim without blemish, offering himself up as a pleasing aroma to God the Father, slain like a kid on behalf of our sins.

Furthermore, after the animal was slain, they were commanded to smear the doorposts and lintel of the house with its blood. This, it seems to me, signifies nothing other than the fact that it is with the noble and precious blood of Christ that we protect our own earthly house, that is, our body, ridding it from the deadness caused by transgression through sharing in his life. For partaking of Christ is life and sanctification. Also, we confound the Destroyer himself. Through the application of the blood we keep far from us the demon who had designs against us, and put to death the passions arising from carnal affections.

You are to understand the doors of the house mentioned just now to mean plainly our senses, through which the character of things is administered to the hearts of us all, and through which an innumerable multitude of desires pours in.

32. Cf. Heb 10.1; 11.40.

33. By this Cyril seems to mean the annual Christian celebration of Easter.

The prophet Joel also speaks of such entry-ways³⁴ when he says, "They will enter through our windows like thieves,"³⁵ for they were not smeared with the blood of Christ.

It commands that the meat should be eaten at night, that is, during the present age. For this is what Paul declared: "The night is far gone, and the day is near."³⁶ Here he expressly calls the age to come "day," which Christ himself will illuminate. So, it says, they should eat the meat in this age. For while we are in this world we shall continue to partake of Christ in a most earthy manner through his holy flesh and³⁷ blood. But when we come to the day of his power, as it is written,³⁸ and when we have ascended to the radiant splendor of the saints, we will be further sanctified in another way, as the dispenser and giver of the good things to come knows.

In another manner, as the death of Christ is shown forth by way of accommodation³⁹ on our account, the partaking of his holy flesh and the drinking of his saving blood likewise serve as a confession of his suffering. For he himself says this in a certain place, when he was instructing his disciples with regard to the mystery,⁴⁰ "As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim my death."⁴¹ And so during the present age, through partaking of those things just mentioned, we suitably proclaim his death. When, however, he comes in the glory of the Father, it will no longer be suitable that we should make this confession of his suffering, but we will come to know him face-to-face as purely God, as Paul says, for we shall glorify him, he says, as Lord.⁴² For having died once, he no longer dies; death has no more do-

34. Lit. "doors." It is necessary to understand in the following citation that in Greek the words for "door" (*thura*) and "window" (*thuris*) are closely related.

35. J1 2.9.

36. Rom 13.12.

37. Var. add "precious."

38. Cf. Ps 110.3 (109.3 LXX).

39. *oikonomikōs* here may bear the more technical sense of "by way of the economy of the Incarnation."

40. Var. "mysteries."

41. 1 Cor 11.26. The words are in fact those of the apostle Paul, with the change of the original "his death" to "my death."

42. Cyril may be thinking of Phil 2.11.

minion over him, in accordance with the words of Paul.⁴³ Therefore, he also said, "Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know him in this way no longer."⁴⁴ For at that time, when the divine economy in which he became flesh finally reaches its conclusion, we will know him more distinctly, not from those things which make him human, but from those things by which he is truly God. [429] For to speak about his fleshly nature will most probably then be redundant, for there will be a superior knowledge, and a certain divine understanding of salvation will come forth from him⁴⁵ and illuminate us with the glory suited to one who is God.

The law commanded that the meat of the lamb should be eaten roasted in fire, for those who come forth to take hold of Christ ought to be heated in their spirits. Paul too commands them to be fervent in spirit.⁴⁶

Yet they were also to eat it, it says, with unleavened loaves and bitter herbs. This indicates in a figure that those who have become partakers of Christ ought to nourish their souls with unleavened, or the purest, desires, conforming their way of life to a genuine and unadulterated simplicity. But they are not for this reason to shy away from the bitterness of trials, as someone said, "Child, when you come to serve God,⁴⁷ prepare your soul for testing. Set your heart aright and persevere."⁴⁸

It further says, "*you shall not eat any of it raw.*" Why is this? The one who eats it raw does not eat it softened by cooking, yet such food cannot at all be managed by one's teeth. This they most certainly do who do not⁴⁹ analyze the word concerning Christ through much inquiry, subjecting it to the fire and testing it, as was sung by David,⁵⁰ "And in my meditation the fire will burn."⁵¹

43. Cf. Rom 6.9.

44. 2 Cor 5.16.

45. Var. add "with the most perfect apprehension."

46. Rom 12.11.

47. Var. "the Lord."

48. Sir 2.1-2.

49. Var. add "finely."

50. Var. "by the melodious singer."

51. Ps 39.3 (38.4 LXX).

It also forbids the meat that they eat to be boiled in water, pointing to watered-down and feeble opinions about Christ, which would not be wholesome food for the minds of believers. The most watered-down opinion concerning him imagines that he was not God according to his nature, but brings him down to the order of created things. This some do in their ignorance and sloth, bending to their own will those things relating to the divine economy that have been said about him on account of his becoming human, and making some manner of food out of the impiety that is within them. So it says, "*you shall not eat it boiled in water, but roasted in fire*," for the reason given above, and because the words of the Lord burn like fire. For all those sayings about his deity are hot, and there is nothing watery or cold about them, as it again says in the book of Psalms, "Your word has been refined with fire, and your servant loves it."⁵²

It orders them to eat "*the head, with the legs and the entrails*." This means that the entire knowledge of the mystery pertaining to Christ is to be received into the minds of believers. For it is necessary to know first of all that the Word, being God, was there in the beginning, in the Father and with the Father, that he is the head, the beginning of all mystery. Then secondly, that as God also, he will come again as judge, bringing an end to our present economy, for this is what the feet symbolize, being the end parts of the whole body. And by the entrails you are to understand the Word being hidden, as it were, within his Incarnation. By means of such things, therefore, our faith is complete, and Christ is whole and complete in us through such knowledge. It is for this reason, it seems to me, [432] that John said, "Who is, who was, and who is to come."⁵³

Then the Lawgiver gave the further command, "*Do not leave any of it until morning*." Taken figuratively, it would seem that this forbids any untoward delay in coming to a complete understanding. For there should be no delay, it says, in attaining the perfect and true knowledge about Christ. Nor should any hold themselves back for too long from the grace of partaking of him perfectly, but, having partaken of him once and for all,

52. Ps 119.140 (118.140 LXX).

53. Rv 1.4, 8; 4.8; 11.17.

should take hold of him wholly. This they do who, having tasted the doctrines in which they were instructed about Christ, and retaining the enlightenment given through the Spirit, they then defer the grace that comes through baptism for an overly long period, until they have come to old age. The fact is that considerable harm results from this that is quite unexpected. For although their own purposes are well met, their hope is never secure. While the intention of such a person has been fulfilled, and he has indeed been sanctified, yet he only has the forgiveness of his transgressions, and so he brings the bare talent to his master, having made no effort to gain more for him.⁵⁴

It further says, "*none of its bones shall be broken.*"⁵⁵ The fact is that bones can never be eaten with our teeth. Now the Word is such a one that is exposed to human minds, appearing white, if I might put it thus, even while he is hidden with respect to his deity. That he is the Son according to his nature, and that he was begotten by God the Father, we understand correctly and well believe, but we inquire no further, in keeping with what the holy prophet said. For who knows how to speak of the manner of his generation? So how could the prophet not be speaking the truth when he cried out, "Who shall declare his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth?"⁵⁶

Surely then, the bones here mean the soundness of doctrines in the mind. The Lawgiver has not permitted us to break these. But the heretics who pervert the correct teachings break them completely. They waste their efforts on the manner of the divine and ineffable generation, suffering from incomparably careless thinking, and refusing to accept in their minds what was written: "Who has measured heaven with the span of his hand?"⁵⁷ So whatever we ourselves see fit to avoid, we wisely shrink back from breaking the lamb's bones, but we rather accept by faith those things done for us.

It should of course also be recalled that what was written

54. Cf. Mt 25.24-27.

55. Cf. also Jn 19.36.

56. Is 53.8.

57. Is 40.12.

concerning our Savior is to be taken quite literally, since the soldiers of Pilate did not break his legs, as it is written.⁵⁸

It says that whatever remained of it until the morning had to be burned. The morning indicates the illumination of the coming age, when we shall see our God and our king face-to-face, and no longer dimly in a riddle and a mirror as we do now, nor in a shadow or in part, as Paul says.⁵⁹ Through the most radiant knowledge that there will be at that time, the dimness which obscured, as it were, our contemplation of him will be done away. So when it says that whatever remained of it until the morning should be burned in fire, this is again by way of a figure.

It commands those who participate in the meal [433] to do so in this manner: "*Let your loins be girded,*" it says; "*let your shoes be on your feet, and your staffs in your hands; and you shall eat it with haste, for it is the Lord's Passover.*" The girding of the loins symbolizes vigor and an active disposition, as was spoken by God to the righteous Job: "Gird up your loins like a man."⁶⁰ And again in the prophets it says concerning a certain person, "And he will have his loins girded with righteousness,"⁶¹ where righteousness is put in place of strength and vigor. The shoe signifies the disposition that is prepared to go wherever God wills without hesitation. Paul too gives such an interpretation: "And having your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace."⁶² And to this the prophet Jeremiah adds, "Now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways?"⁶³ As for the staff in the hand, this indicates the hope that sustains us and maintains our endurance, as is set down in the prophets, "Hope in the Lord, and lean upon God."⁶⁴

It also commands that the lamb should be eaten "*with*

58. Cf. Jn 19.33.

59. Cf. 1 Cor 13.12.

60. Jb 38.3; 40.7.

61. Is 11.5.

62. Eph 6.15.

63. The citation is in fact not from Jeremiah, but from Dt 10.12.

64. Ps 4.6; Is 50.10.

haste."⁶⁵ This very clearly represents the fact that those who have come to participate in Christ ought not to be sluggish or lax in the matter of good works. Rather, they are to show forth a keen and ardent enthusiasm in whatever might seem profitable to them. What the blessed Paul wrote also comes to mind: "Do you not know that those running in a race all run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it."⁶⁶

Now accepting that we ought in every way to pursue what is profitable, I will come to a second meaning. One would not want those who have been sanctified through Christ to be seen to live luxuriously or to be slack. Rather, the law prescribes the manner that was appropriate for those who were to make a journey, most likely pointing to two things. Either it shows that those things then existing in type and shadow would at some time pass on and run to the reality, or it relates to those who have partaken of Christ once and for all, who have availed themselves of feet that are, as it were, lively and most ready to run with enthusiasm after that which is good, to go in the path of all virtue, fleeing the loathsome pleasures that are in the world.

It then directly puts forward the reason why those just mentioned to us should present themselves in such a way, saying that "*it is the Lord's Passover,*" that is, an offering to mark a passing over. For we pass over from a worldly life to a life devoted to the love of God.

Immediately after this, God also reveals to them the kind of benefit they would gain from this, and how great it would be. For he declared that he would strike every firstborn in the land of Egypt,⁶⁷ but for those who have eaten the lamb, it says that the blood would be a sign, and hence they would be under its protection so as not to be destroyed when he struck Egypt. For God punishes the unbelieving and disobedient, and the one who has no share in the sanctification that comes from Christ. He makes himself known only to those who have been anointed with the blood of the true Lamb, and deems them worthy

65. The Greek word for "haste" (*spoudê*) may also have the sense of "effort" or "zeal."

66. 1 Cor 9.24.

67. Var. omit "of Egypt."

of his good attentions. [436] And it is not fitting for those who have been sanctified to perish along with the ungodly, but he grants them the more special benevolence.

It commands that for seven whole days those who had eaten the sacred lamb should be fed with unleavened bread, which is, it seems to me, an encouragement for those who have been sanctified through Christ to feed their souls on the purest desires, which allow no space for any vileness.

It says that the first day and the seventh day should be called holy. For the time at the beginning of our creation was holy, as our forefather Adam had not yet departed from paradise on account of his transgression, but he continued to live in it all the while he kept the commandment that had been given. Furthermore, the time in the later days is also holy, through Christ, who justifies by faith those that draw near to him, and brings them back to the estate that we were in at the beginning. Surely then, in these matters the whole mystery concerning our Savior is prefigured to us. And so he himself spoke very appropriately to the Jews when he said, "If you believed Moses, you would believe in me, for he wrote about me."⁶⁸

Concerning the dedication of the firstborn

1. We have indeed "been redeemed from our former way of life inherited from our forefathers, not with silver or gold," as it is written, "but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or defect. He was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times."⁶⁹ While he was by nature God, in the form of God the Father and equal to him, the Only-Begotten was also named the firstborn, appeared on earth, and lived alongside humankind.⁷⁰ For somewhere in the Psalms he speaks of us to God the Father in heaven, saying, "I will declare your name to my brothers; in

68. Jn 5.46.

69. Cf. 1 Pt 1.18–20.

70. Var. "equal to him, and he appeared upon earth, living alongside human beings, and is named the Only-Begotten firstborn."

the midst of the assembly I will sing praises to you.”⁷¹ For having taken human nature upon himself, and having brought himself down to our level, he is not ashamed to call us brothers,⁷² since through him we have been called to adoption as sons.⁷³

It is also true, and it has been attested to by the events themselves, that the Father gave his own Son as a ransom for the salvation of us all. So, as Paul says, “We were bought with a price, and we are not our own.”⁷⁴ Rather, “one died for all, so that we all may no longer live for ourselves, but for him who died for us and was raised again.”⁷⁵

Each person, therefore, who has been saved through Christ, and who has been greatly enriched by becoming conformed to him through sanctification in the Spirit, is indebted to God for his own life. This is made plain when the all-wise Moses spoke to those of old: *“And it shall come to pass, when the Lord your God brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore to your fathers, and I give it to you, that you shall set apart for the Lord every male that first opens the womb, everything that first opens the womb from the herds or from your cattle; as many males as you shall have, you shall consecrate them to the Lord. Everything that first opens the womb of the donkey, you shall exchange for a lamb; but if you will not exchange it, you shall redeem it. Every firstborn of your sons you shall redeem.”*⁷⁶

When the congregation later gathered at Horeb, there came the same word, and the Lawgiver again stated the law, saying, *“The firstborn of your sons you shall give to me. So you shall do with your calf, your sheep, and your ox. For seven days it shall be with its mother, and on the eighth day you shall give it to me. And you shall be holy men to me.”*⁷⁷ [437]

2. So the God of all appropriately enjoined the dedication of all,⁷⁸ and affirmed that we should consecrate the males to him. For when the firstborn of the Egyptians perished, every house-

71. Ps 22.22 (21.23 LXX).

72. Cf. Heb 2.11.

73. Var. “to equality.”

74. 1 Cor 6.19–20.

75. 2 Cor 5.14–15.

76. Ex 13.11–13.

77. Ex 22.29–31 (22.28–30 LXX).

78. Var. “of the firstborn.”

hold of the beloved Israel was saved and escaped the Destroyer, being anointed with the blood of the lamb as a figure of Christ, who on our account entered among the dead in order that he might annul death. Thus those who have been saved are no longer properly their own, but rather it is fitting that he who put himself in peril on their behalf should henceforth obtain them as his own.

For in this way they who are able to deliver people who have fallen under the control of barbarians, and to set them free from the servitude unexpectedly placed upon them by undertaking to fight for them, then take on, in effect, the position of being their masters, having gained with their own blood those they seized. Our Lord Jesus Christ did the very same thing, it seems to me, when he bound⁷⁹ the hoard of unclean demons, and laid down his own blood on our behalf, and having set aside death in this way, and having annulled incorruption, he henceforth made us to be his own, that we should no longer live our life, but rather live his. For if he had not died for us, we would not have been saved, and if he had not gone among the dead, the irresistible power of death would not have been overthrown. Thus the divine Paul also instructed in this mystery those who had been saved through Christ when he said, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me."⁸⁰ So, as the people of Israel lived, in effect, the life of the slain lamb, so we too live our own life no longer, but the life of Christ who died for us, yet rose to life again. For he, being God, is by nature life itself.

It is therefore necessary that the life we live should be holy, for such is the life of Christ. So choosing to live in a holy manner, we shall be made rich through his most excellent image, having become conformed to the Only-Begotten, as to God, who for our sake became one of us, a firstborn son on account of his humanity. And so we shall truly be a sacred offering dedicated to God the Father. Therefore, the firstborn males are

79. Var. "harassed," "attacked."

80. Gal 2.20.

consecrated, because they are perceived to be made in the image of Christ. For when mothers were bringing their babes to him, our Lord Jesus Christ received them gladly, and declared to the holy disciples, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."⁸¹ From this you understand that God the Father loves the firstborn as being one who conspicuously manifests the image of Christ.

Now it was only the males of the firstborn that were selected. For it was necessary for that which was to be saved by Christ himself to be the one that was manifestly the most excellent, and for those fashioned according to his image to have the form of firstborn sons. For he is both firstborn and male, because he did not know the weakness that leads to sin, but it is the female that is a figure of that weakness. It is necessary, therefore, that those bearing the image of Christ should eschew a weak⁸² mind, [440] to cast off feebleness, slackness, and frailty, as being truly accursed and hateful to God, and to maintain full strength, choosing a manly zeal as being that which is required for attaining virtue.

"Everything that first opens the womb of the donkey, shall be exchanged for a lamb." And what is this saying? According to the law a donkey was unholy and profane, but a lamb was holy, and so it was presented on behalf of the donkey. Once more the law figuratively represents in these matters the fact that what is profane and unholy is made holy in Christ, and that through him that which is unacceptable is made acceptable. For when we were sinful and unclean, for our sakes he became a holy sacrifice and a pleasing aroma. For he died for sinners, the righteous for the unrighteous,⁸³ the clean for the unclean, just as the lamb died for the donkey.

So the firstborn of men were redeemed by offerings, which were most likely given in payment for those who were being presented. For what reason? Because that which was wholly dedicated and consecrated to God needed to be completely

81. Mt 19.14.

82. *thêluprepês*, "befitting a female."

83. Cf. 1 Pt 3.18.

sacrificed. Yet God, who created everything in a state of incorruptibility, refrains from the killing of men. For “he did not create death, nor does he delight in the destruction of living creatures,” as it is written.⁸⁴ Nor does he take pleasure from those who are perishing, as he does from the destruction of the unclean demons. Rather, he commands that a ransom should be laid down on their behalf, and so we ought to confess openly that, in essence, we owe even our very lives to him. For he indicated this ransom when he commanded that the sum called the “two drachmas” should be paid.⁸⁵ So the true ransom given for all is to be understood as Christ himself, through whom and in whom we have overcome corruption, for he gave himself for us.

It said that the lamb should spend seven days with its mother, and be offered on the eighth. For that which was born from the womb was not then immediately slaughtered, but it was first prepared somewhat and strengthened a little with the milk of the mother that bore it. Only then, God indicated, could it suitably be used as a fragrant offering. Yet this was also a figure of something mystical and essential, which right up to the present time has been observed by us whose practice it is to dedicate animals⁸⁶ of a spiritual nature to the God who rules over all. For we do not present to God those recently called, who have only just come to faith, and who are uninitiated in divine and bloodless sacrifice. But rather we first instruct them, committing them, as it were, into the care of their mother, that is, the church, and we fatten them upon the word, as though with a kind of smooth milk suitable for infants. The divine Paul, for instance, writing to those who had not yet attained maturity, said, “I gave you milk to drink, and not solid food; for you were not yet able to take it, and even now you are still not able.”⁸⁷ Again in another letter he says, “For everyone who partakes of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is an in-

84. Wis 1.13.

85. Cf. Ex 30.13; Mt 17.24.

86. Var. “firstborn.”

87. 1 Cor 3.2.

fant. But solid food is for the mature, whose faculties have been trained through practice to discern both good and evil.”⁸⁸

So those who have reached maturity, and have been extremely well nourished through words of instruction, we bring forward on the eighth day, that is, once the time of their infancy has passed and a new period of time then comes after it, in which [441] one may seasonably and suitably set before them the mystery of Christ. For the eighth day signifies to us the time of the resurrection, when Christ, having endured death for our sakes, came back to life, to whom we are conformed, having died spiritually through holy baptism in order that we might also attain the resurrection. Paul likewise affirms this when he writes, “For we were buried with him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too should walk in newness of life.”⁸⁹

Therefore, we have been born again through faith into a knowledge of the truth, and have now become rich through our conformity to our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the firstborn among us and for us. By drinking the pure, spiritual milk, and growing up into the measure of his full stature, as it is written,⁹⁰ we will then all be sacred, an offering dedicated to God. We died to the world, yet we are spiritually alive to God in holiness. This, in my view, is the significance of sacrificing the first-born animals at the altar. The divine Paul writes to those who have been sanctified in this way, “For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”⁹¹ The death of the saints is, therefore, sacred, and it seems to me that the blessed David viewed it in such a way, for he says, “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.”⁹²

Now the sort of ideas expressed above, as I consider it, would not only doubtless be appropriate for those Gentiles who turn to a knowledge of the truth, but also especially for those

88. Heb 5.13–14.

89. Rom 6.4.

90. Cf. Eph 4.13.

91. Col 3.3.

92. Ps 116.15 (115.6 LXX).

called out from the ministration under the law to justification in Christ and sanctification in the Spirit. For the lamb, or the baby calf, was reared for seven days by its mother, and then on the eighth day it was presented. In this, I believe, God was showing by means of a figure (for the law was a shadow) how it was necessary that those who would be holy and who would be offered up as a pleasing aroma to God should first be instructed through types, and by teachings that are not very suitable for grown men, but are rather more fit for infants. So the mystery of Christ signified by the eighth day is a particularly appropriate time for attaining the perfection mentioned above.

God was, therefore, unapproachable by means of the ministration of the law, but he became approachable only through Christ. For through him we have obtained access,⁹³ which came as it were after the seventh day, that is, once the Sabbath day pertaining to the law had passed, it being a complete and utter cessation with regard to the ministration according to the law. For the law made no one perfect, but it is Christ who brings us to this. For those who believe are fit for virtue, possessing a perfection of knowledge through him, for we have the mind of Christ. Through him and with him be glory to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever.⁹⁴ Amen.

*Concerning Marah and the tree that was
shown to the blessed Moses*

1. When the people of Israel departed from the land of the Egyptians, having only just thrown off the grievous yoke of bondage [444], they went through the midst of the sea as though on dry land, passing through unhindered. For at the divine command the waters drew back and stood up like a wall. After this they saw the whole of Pharaoh's army venturing after them and drowning in the waters, and so those who had mercilessly ill-treated them perished miserably. Then they offered up

93. Cf. Rom 5.2.

94. Var. "Through him and with him it is proper to ascribe all glory, honor, and worship to God the Father, with the Holy Spirit, now and always and for ever."

songs to God, and honored him with hymns of thanksgiving, saying, *"Let us sing to the Lord, for he is greatly glorified; horse and rider he has cast into the sea. He was my helper and protector for salvation."*⁹⁵ For the God of all had worked notable wonders. Besides making it possible for those who were led by him to pass with ease through the sea, he had further shown them very many absolutely astonishing miracles in Egypt. This he did so that from then on they might have it firmly established in their minds and also believe that these things were not done by any of those falsely called gods, being inventions of human design and images merely made out of wood or stone, but that God, being the Lord of all, commands the creation that lies at his feet, and whatever he wishes to accomplish he easily brings to pass. And in order that they should be even more greatly amazed, he ordered them to depart from a wealthy land, and to hasten to the land promised to their fathers, with the all-wise Moses leading and commanding them.

After the events described, the sacred Scripture next explains that *Moses brought up the people of Israel from the Red Sea, and led them into the wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness without finding any water to drink. They came to Marah, and were not able to drink the water of Marah, because it was bitter. For this reason the name of that place was called Bitterness.*⁹⁶ *Then the people grumbled against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" So Moses cried out to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree. He threw the tree into the water, and the water became sweet. There God made for them*⁹⁷ *ordinances, statutes,*⁹⁸ *and judgments. And there he tested them, and said, "If you will indeed hear the voice of the Lord your God, and do what is pleasing to him, and give heed to his commandments, and keep all his ordinances, no disease which I brought upon the Egyptians will I bring upon you; for I am the Lord who heals you."* *Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water, and seventy trunks of palm trees; so they camped there beside the waters.*⁹⁹

95. Ex 15.1-2.

96. This is the meaning of the Hebrew name Marah.

97. In both Hebrew and Greek the pronoun is singular, "him," but no doubt the reference is to the people as a whole.

98. Var. omit "statutes."

99. Ex 15.22-27.

Note, then, how prudent it was of God not to bring those who had been redeemed into a state of ease without being exercised, and not to grant them the space to enjoy comforts, so that they should not soon forget the one who was able to deliver them, and so easily sink back into the kind of error¹⁰⁰ that there had been in Egypt. For troubles draw us to God. And so the prophet said, “Lord, in distress I remembered you; your chastening was upon us with slight affliction.”¹⁰¹

This is the reason why, when they were traveling through a remote, parched land, they lacked those things essential for life, for they did not [445] find any water to drink. So they continued to be thirsty until the third day, when what they longed for was only then discovered. But it was altogether useless, because the water of Marah was bitter. And it was not certain that those thirsty people would be able to survive, since it says that they were close to death. Therefore, they were vexed, and cried out against their mediator, but Moses was at a loss. Then, when the God who knows all things showed him a tree, he threw it into the waters, and incredibly the pool was changed into water that was sweet and most fit for drinking. Having drunk their fill and being strengthened, they marveled at the divine miracle. After this they made camp by twelve springs of water, where there were also seventy trunks of palm trees. And at that time they stayed there refreshing themselves.

So then, that it was by faith and not otherwise that one was able to find the way of salvation, God fully demonstrated through types and shadows. Therefore, God commanded the slaying of the lamb in Egypt, and they were willing to believe because by being anointed with its blood they would avoid the imminent death of the firstborn. May it not most reasonably be claimed that what was done here was an exercise of faith? For how is it, tell me, that death should fear the slaying of a lamb? But the matter was a figure of the mystery. For by his own blood Christ delivers those who are sanctified by faith, and brings about the destruction of death, which is far better.

100. Or “waywardness.” This refers no doubt to idolatrous practices.

101. Is 26.16.

Now what more the affair at Marah is about, we shall state as we are able.

2. The inspired Scripture likens the divine word to water. For just as physical water gives life to the body, so too the divine word, when it comes down, gives life to the mind and may profit it beyond measure. So Christ, addressing the crowd of the Jews, cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink."¹⁰² And to the woman of Samaria he said, "Everyone who drinks this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks the water that I will give him will never thirst."¹⁰³ So then, when the people of Israel left the hateful servitude of the Egyptians, they underwent a change in their thinking so that they should put into practice¹⁰⁴ what it was that God desired. They had not yet, however, been instructed in the heavenly laws and had not yet tasted the spiritual waters, but had, in effect, a mind that was dry and thirsty.

Then they happened to come to Marah, but they were not able to drink the water, because it was bitter. Once Moses had thrown in the tree, the water was relieved of its innate bitterness. So what, then, is Marah? One might say that it is the letter of the law. For the law is bitter, since it brings punishment. Therefore, the divine Paul said, "Anyone who disregarded the law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses."¹⁰⁵

We see that it was bitter and grievous even for the people who perhaps wished to practice it correctly. And so the divine disciples, speaking to those who after coming to faith also adhered to certain elements of the ministration under the law, expressly said, "Now why do you put God to the test by putting a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear?"¹⁰⁶ So too the blessed [448] Paul speaks of the ordinance given through the all-wise Moses as the ministry of condemnation, for he said, "If the ministry

¹⁰². Jn 7:37.

¹⁰³. Jn 4:13-14.

¹⁰⁴. Var. "so as to wish to be mindful of."

¹⁰⁵. Heb 10:28.

¹⁰⁶. Acts 15:10.

of condemnation had glory, how much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory!"¹⁰⁷ And in another place he said, "The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."¹⁰⁸ The letter, I consider, clearly speaks of the law, while the Spirit speaks of worship in the Spirit, that is, the gospel. For the law is bitter, and Marah in fact means "bitter."

Now, that the instruction given through the law, inasmuch as it came in figures, did not of itself give life, is abundantly confirmed. "For no one is justified before God by the law," as it is written.¹⁰⁹ The law itself, however, would one day indeed give life, and be freed from the bitterness that exists with respect to the letter, when it would be receptive of the mystery pertaining to Christ: "For Christ is the end of the law for salvation to everyone who believes,"¹¹⁰ when, of course, the law is understood spiritually. What happened at Marah was plainly a figure of this. For the tree depicts the cross of the Savior, namely the mystery concerning him, and it is precisely when he is accepted by those under the law that they find the bitter to be sweet. For to those who believe in Christ the law does not bring accusations or punishment, but it is now a giver of life, the literal sense being wonderfully transformed for us into a spiritual contemplation, and a guide to Christ, who is life and the giver of life. Then the law will also define ordinances and judgments for us. For it will directly lead us to that which pleases him and will show us the path to all that is noble, making us free from fear and the expectation of punishment. For "*no plague*," it says, "*which I brought upon the Egyptians will I bring upon you*." Surely then, to those under the law who receive this mystery it gives the wonderful hope of being removed from punishment. This, it seems to me, is what the Savior himself said to the people of the Jews at the time of his visitation, "Truly, truly, I say to you that he who hears my word and believes in the one who sent me has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has

107. 2 Cor 3.9.

108. 2 Cor 3.6.

109. Gal 3.11.

110. Rom 10.4. Cyril puts "salvation" in place of the original reading "righteousness."

passed from death to life.”¹¹¹ And again, “Whoever believes in the Son is not condemned.”¹¹²

So once God has shown forth the ordinances of Christ, then and only then shall we come to Elim, which means “going up.”¹¹³ For we ascend from our former state of infancy to a perfection of mind, attaining to the measure of the full stature of Christ, and we delight in the springs of spiritual water. These twelve springs portray to us the band of holy apostles. Yet we also find there to be seventy trunks of palm trees, for it is written that after the holy apostles the Lord appointed seventy others.¹¹⁴ That the divine disciples are indeed springs of water pouring out for us the divine and saving word that is necessary for life, the God of all wonderfully shows to those in the time of the law who were justified, saying, “Draw water with joy from the wells of salvation.”¹¹⁵ And the divine [449] singer said concerning every saint, “The righteous will flourish like a palm tree.”¹¹⁶ And no wonder, for Christ himself is called this by the inspired Scripture. For the spiritual bride, that is the church, spoke of the heavenly bridegroom from above, namely Christ, and said, “I will climb up the palm tree, I will take hold of its high branches.”¹¹⁷ For this tree is always flourishing, is both sweet and well-rooted, being pure white on the inside. And such spiritually is Christ, through whom and with whom be glory to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

Concerning the manna and the quails

1. Now the God of all performs wonders, going from strength to strength, as it is written.¹¹⁸ He finds a means of providing for

¹¹¹. Jn 5.24.

¹¹². Jn 3.18.

¹¹³. The name Elim is of uncertain meaning. The sense of “going up” is extremely doubtful.

¹¹⁴. Cf. Lk 10.1.

¹¹⁵. Is 12.3.

¹¹⁶. Ps 92.12 (91.13 LXX).

¹¹⁷. Song 7.8 (7.9 LXX).

¹¹⁸. Cyril may have had in mind the phrase “from strength to strength” occurring in Ps 84.7 (83.8 LXX), although it is not there speaking of God.

the helpless, in every place taking thought for his glory, and showing in many different ways that with him alone there is the ability to accomplish effortlessly deeds that transcend speech.¹¹⁹ And it is right that we should be amazed at such things, that God might be perceived through them all, not as though they were anything done by the craft of men, by those given over to ungodliness, but actions carried out truly according to his nature. For from those things that are most gloriously performed, one might also quite readily perceive his pure nature, to which belong his goodness, his omnipotence, and the irresistible power to do absolutely anything that he chooses. Together with these there is also his longsuffering.

Observe that what I am saying is also very evident in those matters set before us right now. For it is written, *On the fifteenth day of the second month after they had come out of the land of Egypt, the whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The people of Israel said to them, "Would that we had been struck by the Lord and died in the land of Egypt, when we sat by pots of meat and ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to make this whole congregation die of hunger."* Then the Lord said to Moses, *"Behold, I will rain down bread for you from heaven, and the people shall go out and gather the amount they need for the day, that I might test them to see if they will follow my law. On the sixth day they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be double what they gather on the other days."*¹²⁰

Now the firstborn of the Egyptians utterly perished, as we said previously, and the people of Israel were sent away from that country. It was not possible, it may be said, for them to arrange any provisions, for they had only brought with them lumps of dough that was not yet leavened.¹²¹ Being supplied merely with what happened to be at hand, they departed in haste, the same fear being both upon the Egyptians who were persecuting them and upon those suffering the persecution. For the Egyptians expected to join shortly those who had already perished, unless they submitted to the divine command

119. Or "reason."

120. Ex 16.1-5.

121. Var. add "wrapped up in their garments"; as Ex 12.34.

and sent Israel out of their country. And the Israelites wholly believed that, if they should be held back and lose the opportunity to flee, more agonies would come on top of their previous sufferings, [452] and that they would be in peril of dying without mercy.

So they departed, not fully having taken thought for the journey, and having taken hardly anything in their hands, but by necessity they had just grabbed those things lying around their houses that were easy to carry. These things they soon ate up, and being then perplexed about where they could find the necessities of life in the wilderness, they lapsed into a longing for the food of Egypt. They forgot that they had been brought out from great extremities and from bondage in Egypt, and cried out for help by any means. They were angry that they had been let go, and preferred to have their vile bellies full than to have the much-desired freedom that they had all prayed for.

Now this matter troubled the mediator, Moses. So God promised that he would immediately supply them with an abundance of food. Although they had provoked him greatly, he still dealt with them gently. While there was nothing at all blameworthy in their desire for him to give them the necessities of life, their grumbling was deeply grievous. For the Savior himself taught us to say in our prayers, "Give us today our daily bread."¹²² When we say this, we are of course in no way bringing an accusation against the Master, but we are rather asking him for the necessities of life. The people of the Jews, however, in having to ask for food, were angry that they had been set free, and foolishly they insulted such a noble and precious grace, as though it had sent them away from the most pleasurable things, like bread and meat. Therefore, they grumbled and cried out in a profane manner. Yet God was longsuffering, and promised them an abundance beyond expectation. And so in his ineffable power he appointed quails in the evening, and then manna also in the morning. As the divine David said, "He gave them bread from heaven; men ate the bread of angels."¹²³ He assures us through the trials and events of life that God is able to give

¹²². Mt 6.11.

¹²³. Ps 78.24-25 (77.24-25 LXX).

food and to prepare a table in the desert, as our Lord Jesus Christ also did when he performed the same miracle. He broke five loaves and satisfied many people in the wilderness, when twelve baskets of pieces left over were gathered.¹²⁴

The way in which miracles are wrought is completely beyond investigation, and so such things that cannot be understood should be revered in faith, and may God hear from all those who are amazed, "I know that you can do all things, and nothing is impossible for you."¹²⁵

2. In these matters, however, our discussion has been about physical things.¹²⁶ But for us who are especially eager to pursue the truth, it is necessary to inquire closely what the interpretation arising out of spiritual contemplation might now be, or what the figures of the law might mean. By this means we will also learn how the way of life under the law is undoubtedly inferior to that under the gospel. The former was not free from accusations of carnality,¹²⁷ nor was it delivered from earthly desires. But the divine way of life under the gospel is spiritual and flawless, having incomparable beauty. So we shall receive a clear demonstration and sure understanding with regard to each of these matters as we carefully examine what is stated about them both in [453] the inspired Scripture.

Now it says, *In the evening quails came up and covered the camp, and in the morning dew had come to rest around the camp. And behold, on the surface of the wilderness there was a fine substance, white like coriander upon the ground. When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "What is this?" For they did not know what it was.*

Then Moses said to them, "This is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat. This is what the Lord has commanded: Each of you gather as much as is needed, an omer for each person according to the number of persons. Let each one gather for those who share his tent." The people of Israel did so, and gathered it, some more, some less. When they measured out an omer, the one who had gathered much had nothing over,

124. Cf. Mt 14.14-21.

125. Jb 42.2.

126. *aisthêtôn*, "tangible," "sensible." By this term Cyril intends the literal meaning.

127. Lit. "love of the flesh."

and the one who had gathered less had no lack. Each one gathered as much as was needed for his family.

*Then Moses said to them, "Let no one leave any of it until the morning." But they did not listen to Moses; some left part of it until the morning, and it bred worms and stank, so Moses was angry with them.*¹²⁸

*After other things it further says, Then Moses said to them, "This is the word that the Lord has spoken: Tomorrow is the Sabbath, a holy rest to the Lord. Bake whatever you want to bake, and boil whatever you want to boil, and all that is left over store away until the morning." So they kept some of it until the morning, as Moses commanded them, and it did not stink, nor were there any worms in it.*¹²⁹

God commands each one to gather enough for himself. And if one wished perhaps also to gather for those who were not there and to be adorned with the law of love, he by no means prohibits this action. Yet he utterly forbids that it should be kept until the morning. He said that this could only be done the day before the Sabbath, so that the law of rest would not be dishonored. For the manna was not to be found at all on the Sabbath, nor did God send it down, so in this way they were, in effect, compelled to refrain from work on the Sabbath. Some, however, cared little for the divine oracles and kept some manna even before the Sabbath came, and, as the sacred Scripture says, *it bred worms and stank, so Moses was angry.* Moreover, they sallied forth to gather on the Sabbath also, and God was displeased. For this is what is written: *It came to pass on the seventh day that some of the people went out to gather manna, but they did not find any. Then the Lord said to Moses, "How long will you refuse to heed my commandments and my law? See, the Lord has given*¹³⁰ *this day as a Sabbath; therefore on the sixth day he has given you bread for two days. Every one of you should stay in your homes; let no one go out from his place on the seventh day.*"¹³¹

What fitting and most suitable message is there for us in these things that were stated? Why did the quails come in the evening, and why was the manna given in the light of the morn-

¹²⁸ Ex 16.13–20.

¹²⁹ Ex 16.23–24.

¹³⁰ Var. add "you" (as Ex 16.29).

¹³¹ Ex 16.27–29.

ing? I, for my part, believe it is proper to inquire into this closely, and before all else, into what is prefigured by the quails, and also by the manna. [456]

3. That the life of the Jews was not free from carnal lusts may readily be understood, and the fact that they sought to make the meat of Egypt their food clearly proves this, and shows that their mind was overcome by such an inclination, and all but dominated by it. Yet in these matters there does not appear to be anything that affects us, because we have been sanctified in Christ, and we are above fleshly impurity. For the divine Paul bears witness and writes, "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."¹³² And what does it mean to say they "have crucified" the flesh except that they have delivered it over to death, spiritually speaking, since they do not suffer themselves to live according to the flesh, nor do they care to set their minds upon what is transient? Rather, they put to death what is earthly in them: immorality, passion, and evil desire,¹³³ and they spend their lives upon the earth striving after a heavenly way of life. For the sacred Scripture speaks of this when it exclaims, "Walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify¹³⁴ the desires of the flesh."¹³⁵

So then, the mind of the Jews was feeble and was very easily overcome by the assault of the passions, for it still had a love for the things of the flesh and yielded to the more earthly concerns. This, I say, is what is signified to us by means of the quail.

God does indeed provide for those who seek him, not inducing them to desire, nor allowing them to be overwhelmed by passions. For to live an outstanding life and to be wholly sanctified was not for those under the law, but was rather reserved for those living by the Spirit. That is why God also promised through the prophet a new covenant,¹³⁶ not like the first one, because it was not without fault. But he promised another covenant that was spiritual, able to perfect the believer's conscience.

¹³². Gal 5.24.

¹³³. Cf. Col 3.5.

¹³⁴. Or "you will not gratify."

¹³⁵. Gal 5.16.

¹³⁶. Cf. Jer 31.31.

Observe how the flight of quails comes to the synagogue of the Jews in the evening, for it says, *In the evening quails came up*. By implication this is showing us how the one who loves earthly things does not exist in spiritual light, but in the darkness of night. And the matter is undeniably so, for the mind of the Jews has not been set free from ignorance and dullness, that is, from a spiritual gloom. Accordingly, Christ proclaimed, "I am the light of the world."¹³⁷ Therefore, those who do not yet believe are still in the gloom or in darkness, as it were, for they have not come to the light. So Christ said somewhere concerning the Pharisees and the people under their influence, "Leave them alone, for they are blind guides of the blind."¹³⁸ So then, the mind of the Jews is darkened. For this reason they have a morbid fleshly craving and all but depend upon earthly things.

Now let us consider the manna to be a shadow and figure of the teachings and spiritual gifts given through Christ, which things are from heaven above and have nothing earthly about them, nor are they tainted with fleshly abominations. Truly these are not the food of men only, but also of angels. For in himself the Son manifested the Father to us, and through him we have come to believe¹³⁹ the teaching concerning the holy and consubstantial Trinity, and we have been well and truly guided into every path of virtue. So the correct and unadulterated knowledge of these things is indeed spiritual food.¹⁴⁰ [457]

The supply of Christ's teachings was given, so to speak, as if in the light of day. Accordingly, the manna was given to those in ancient times at daybreak, as the light began to shine. So upon us who believe, the day has dawned, as it is written, "The morning star has risen in all our hearts,"¹⁴¹ and, "The sun of righteousness has appeared,"¹⁴² that is, Christ, the giver of spiritual manna.¹⁴³

For that physical manna was, as it were, an image, but Christ

¹³⁷. Jn 8.12.

¹³⁸. Mt 15.14.

¹³⁹. Var. "we have been instructed in."

¹⁴⁰. Or "the food of [our] spirits."

¹⁴¹. 2 Pt 1.19.

¹⁴². Mal 4.2.

¹⁴³. Or "the intelligible manna."

is the true manna. This is certain from what he said to the Jews: "Your fathers ate manna in the desert and died. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that anyone might eat from it and not die. I am the living bread, which came down from heaven. If anyone eats from this bread, he shall live forever. And the bread that I shall give is my flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."¹⁴⁴

Our Lord Jesus Christ provides us with food for everlasting life, both by his counsels, which lead to godliness, and by the mystical blessing.¹⁴⁵ He himself therefore truly is, and through him comes, the divine, life-giving manna. It is the one who eats this manna that is free from corruption and escapes death, not those who ate the physical manna. For the figure was not able to save, but it was merely a semblance of the reality.

Having sent down the manna like rain from above, God commanded each to gather as much as was needed, those living in the same tent gathering together if they wished. For it says, "*Let each one of you gather with those who share his tent,*" and also, "*Do not let any of it remain until the morning,*" for we must fill ourselves up with the divine teachings of the gospel.

Now to both great and small, Christ apportions to us grace from himself in the same measure, and likewise supplies us all so that we may have life. Moreover, he wishes those who are stronger to gather for others, and to toil on behalf of their brothers, and to bestow upon them the benefit of their labors, and to make them also to become sharers in the heavenly gifts. And this, I believe, is the very thing that was spoken to the holy apostles: "Freely you have received, freely give."¹⁴⁶ For when these gather much manna for themselves, they are eager to share it with those who live in the same tent, that is, the church. For the divine disciples carried out the task of admonishing the believers, of giving instruction, and leading them into everything that was commendable, ungrudgingly providing for all to participate in the grace which they themselves had received abundantly from Christ. And so the blessed Paul wrote

¹⁴⁴. Jn 6.49-51.

¹⁴⁵. That is, the Eucharist.

¹⁴⁶. Mt 10.8.

to certain believers, "For I desire to see you, that I may impart some spiritual gift to you to strengthen you."¹⁴⁷

Now it may be that "*Let each one of you gather with those who share his tent*" could be understood differently, which is that everyone was not to gather in an indiscriminate way, nor should the manna be mixed together, but that they should undertake the gathering with respect to their kindred, that is, those of their tent. For it is necessary for those of us sharing the same faith to be filled with divine words and to seek the spiritual manna together, not with those whose thoughts radically differ, and so to be foolishly carried away by strangers. [460] So what we do in fact is to drive away from the churches those who hold to other doctrines and who are wayward, while with those who belong to the same faith we receive the food of heaven together in abundance.

It said that they were not¹⁴⁸ to leave any until the morning. The law here again indicates that the use of things that were only types, once the time was passed during which they were still helpful and necessary, wholly and utterly leads to judgment and punishment, for what was kept *bred worms*. That this is a foreshadowing of destruction and punishment is evident. For all those who keep the shadow after the reality has been revealed will suffer destruction and punishment. We can say that some such thing happened to those to whom the blessed Paul wrote, "You who are seeking to be justified by the law have been severed from Christ; you have fallen away from grace."¹⁴⁹ And also, "Having begun with the Spirit, do you now attain your goal by the flesh? Have you suffered so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain?"¹⁵⁰ Surely then, it forbids that it should be kept until the morning, so that by means of "*the morning*" we may understand the time after the law, during which Christ's coming occurred and the divine light shone upon us.

Yet, as they were about to observe the Sabbath, the people of Israel did keep it until the morning, and this is what God

147. Rom 1.11.

148. Var. "They were forbidden."

149. Gal 5.4.

150. Gal 3.3-4.

commanded. So what, then, does it mean to keep that which had been gathered prior to the Sabbath, which did not then turn rotten, and which did not make Moses angry with those who kept it?

Now although through faith we come to the Sabbath rest which we understand to exist in Christ, that is, to the rest and cessation from sin, we do not reject as useless the instruction of the law, which was earlier gathered¹⁵¹ and stored up among us, so to speak, and which leads us to Christ, for the law was a tutor.¹⁵² Rather, having the law as well as the teachings of the gospel, we will not be far from offering befitting praise, and God will not be angry at those who do this. The Savior himself teaches this when he says to us, "Every scribe instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new things as well as old."¹⁵³

So the manna that was gathered up among us beforehand through the law cannot be rejected, since it was something to be kept on the spiritual Sabbath. For we who observe the Sabbath in Christ are presented with the shadows given through Moses, so that in them we may search out the reality. Also, as gathering on the Sabbath was an act that was placed under a curse and under punishment, there was all the more reason for God not to send down the manna. For as in Christ we observe the Sabbath in its spiritual sense, we will no more gather those things which serve as types. We will not suffer circumcision in the flesh, nor will we sacrifice oxen and sheep, but rather we will set aside the earthiness of the types, since we have the actual reality, which is Christ.

4. The discussion about these matters set before us has, to my mind, been sufficiently long and clear. But since in the book called Numbers we have a section in which we find other additional matters narrated, I thought it necessary not to leave those things unexamined about which Exodus is silent. An understanding of these would be rather significant¹⁵⁴ for our readers.

151. Lit. "heaped up."

152. *paidagôgos*, "pedagogue," "guide," "instructor"; cf. Gal 3.24.

153. Mt 13.52.

154. Var. "There would be a rather significant benefit in these things."

Now it is written: "The rabble¹⁵⁵ [461] that was among them had a strong craving, and they and the people of Israel sat down and wept, and said, 'Who will give us meat to eat? We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, and the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic. But now, our appetite is gone; there is nothing before our eyes except this manna!'"¹⁵⁶ Then to these words it adds: "And Moses heard the people of every family weeping, each at the entrance to their tent. Then the Lord became exceedingly angry, and the matter was evil in the sight of Moses."¹⁵⁷

Note, then, how the Israelites were very easily unsettled. They were not of such a sort as could be of any use to others, but were afflicted with feebleness and were concerned solely with their own affairs. For the rabble were suffering from a most unbecoming and most loathsome craving. And these, when it was reasonable to rebuke them in order to persuade them to be minded to choose a more proper course of action, became even worse. The divine Moses was extremely distraught indeed, and expressly told the God of all that he was not able to bear such a heavy and intolerable burden alone. To show the truth of the matter, and that he bore a most difficult and unmanageable burden,¹⁵⁸ he asked, "Where am I to get meat to give to all these people?" By this time Moses had reached the point of despair over this, wishing that his life would now somehow come to an end, for "If this is how you are going to treat me," he said, "kill me outright, so that I may not see my affliction."¹⁵⁹ God bore with Moses and instructed him to appoint especially chosen men, seventy in number from all the congregation, who would help him and share the responsibility with him. The Lord said to him, "Gather to me seventy men from the elders of Israel, whom you yourself know to be elders of the people and their scribes; and bring them to the tent of witness, and they shall stand there with you. And I will come

155. Or "mixed multitude."

156. Nm 11.4-6.

157. Nm 11.10.

158. Var. add "in the wilderness."

159. Nm 11.15.

down, and I will speak with you there. I will take some of the Spirit that is upon you and will put it upon them; and they will help you bear the impulses of the people, and you will not bear them alone.”¹⁶⁰

When this happened (for Moses immediately put forward those men who were more eminent than the rest), the God of all filled them with the Holy Spirit. Then after this he granted the desires of those who were weeping and sent them the quails. As these birds were lying around the camp in heaps, the people gathered them with great joy. But they devoured them in a manner more suitable to animals, having no care about greediness or concern for moderation.

Although an immeasurable quantity of birds was seized and collected, and the eating of the meat was to last for a whole month,¹⁶¹ a fatal disease then came upon them, and as the prophet says, “The grave has enlarged its appetite, and opened its mouth without ceasing.”¹⁶² For it says, “While the meat was still between their teeth, before it was consumed, the Lord was angry with the people, and he struck them with an exceedingly severe plague. So the name of that place was called Grave of Craving, because there they buried the people who had the craving.”¹⁶³ For although they [464] lacked none of the good things they needed, but were abundantly fed on allotted supplies of manna, they desired meat and leeks and spoke of cucumbers and melons, as well as onions and garlic. Consequently, once they had eaten, they soon perished. For God gave the quails, not because he approved of their craving, but rather to demonstrate fully through actions that nothing was impossible for him. But following on from this, he further punished those who were guilty of indulging in shameful pleasures.

Something similar befell the wretched Jews at the time of our Savior’s visitation. For those former things were shadows of these later ones, and the things that happened long ago were figures that portrayed later events ahead of time. For when the

¹⁶⁰ Nm 11.16–17.

¹⁶¹ Cf. Nm 11.21.

¹⁶² Is 5.14.

¹⁶³ Nm 11.33–34.

true manna, Christ, came to us from heaven above and, as it were, fed us, and promised everlasting life, they foolishly chose the inferior and truly worldly benefit to be gained from earthly things. So they not only gave great offense to the God of all, but to the divine Moses himself also, for it is written, "And the Lord became exceedingly angry with his people, and the matter was evil in the sight of Moses."¹⁶⁴ For the mind of the saints always follows the same course chosen by God.

Indeed then, from the parable found in the gospel one might learn that the people of the Jews in every way put temporal and carnal things before the good gifts from above. For it is usual that those invited to a banquet should gather willingly for the wedding, but these went off, one to his field, another to his business. And they made excuses, such as "I have married a wife," or, "I have bought a field and am not able to come." That Moses himself cried out against the disobedience of the Jews, our Lord Jesus Christ confirmed when he said, "Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father. The one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me."¹⁶⁵

Now Moses reckoned that having to bear with Israel any longer was extremely wearisome. So God consecrated seventy other men, as we said before. For the law, of which Moses is reasonably understood to be a figure, was not able to lead us alone. Accordingly, seventy¹⁶⁶ others were appointed, that they should carry out what that man left undone, and they were set forth, so to speak, as a perfect number. For the number seventy was symbolic of something. Who, then, are they? They are those who came after Moses, who were brought forth by Christ to serve as leaders,¹⁶⁷ of whom the divine disciples were the firstfruits of their kind.¹⁶⁸

God is said to take some of the Spirit that was upon Moses and to put it within those men who were selected, and this was

¹⁶⁴. Nm 11.10.

¹⁶⁵. Excuses: Lk 14.18, 20. Jesus's words on Moses: Jn 5.45-46.

¹⁶⁶. Var. omit "seventy."

¹⁶⁷. Var. add "of the people."

¹⁶⁸. Lit. "were the firstfruits and fathers."

for no other reason than that we should believe that by the one Holy Spirit, God sanctifies both the saints who came before us and us ourselves. For as the Father is one, so likewise the Son is one, and so too the Holy Spirit is one, who was in the prophets and is in us also. So since the Spirit is one, it is not proper to understand him as being divided among many, but he is indivisible, and yet is in many distributed gifts, [465] having perfection in them all.

One should note that the God of all commanded the seventy chosen men to gather together. But the full number did not assemble, for two of them were missing, Medad and Eldad. Though these were delayed, God still filled them with the Spirit, for they prophesied within the camp. Now some were zealous¹⁶⁹ for Moses over these two, saying moreover that they ought to be restrained. But Moses, who prefigured the mystery of Christ, said, "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, when the Lord shall put his Spirit upon them."¹⁷⁰

From these matters we understand that the law caught many as in a net, and brought them to God so as to instruct them in the mystery of Christ. Not all, however, were brought like this, but it is also the case that Christ sanctified those who came later.¹⁷¹ For those from the Gentiles were called to a knowledge of the truth, not through Moses or the law, but rather by the power of God the Father, when he revealed his own image, namely his Son, to those who did not know him. These he appointed to be called and holy, anointing them with his Spirit. And they became zealous, both those under the law who were in Christ and those justified by faith and sanctified by the Spirit. Moses was nevertheless glad at what happened, as he came to learn of the mystery in advance. Surely then, the people of the Jews who are extraordinarily jealous of the saints in Christ are not mindful of these matters that concerned Moses.

So then, harking back to the beginning of the discussion,

169. This same verb (*zēlousi*) also has the sense of "be jealous."

170. Nm 11.29. The first part of the citation has been amended from Cyril's "Who would give prophets to the Lord's people."

171. Cyril here uses exactly the same word (*husterizontas*) as was translated "delayed" a few sentences above in connection with Eldad and Medad.

we said in the first section that the people¹⁷² of the Jews are still carnal. But the others, those who are a people in Christ through faith, are holy and¹⁷³ truly greater, for the physical manna served as a shadow and figure of the gifts given through Christ. Besides this, we were taught that if we keep the shadows of the law after the time arranged for them, we shall give offense to God, and we will also be a cause of vexation to the saints themselves. For Moses was angry with those who kept the manna.

In the second section it was seen that the Jews dishonored the spiritual manna. They despised the heavenly things that were given through Christ, but were inclined towards more earthly things, and being very much disposed towards foul pleasures, they perished in a remarkable manner. For it was altogether necessary to regard the things of God as superior, and that through faith, honor should be given to the Savior and Redeemer of us all, namely Christ, through whom and with whom be glory to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever. Amen.

*Concerning the three miracles
performed through Moses*

1. Truly, nobody is able to examine what the divine Being¹⁷⁴ is really like. For he is utterly unseeable, is beyond all understanding, and surpasses the power of reason. He can only be known by himself alone. Christ explains this when he exclaims, "For no one knows who the Son is, except the Father, or knows who the Father is, except the Son and the one to whom the Son wishes to reveal him."¹⁷⁵ So now the Only-Begotten has shown us the exceptional beauty of God the Father, presenting himself as a radiant image. This is why he says, "He who has seen me has seen the Father."¹⁷⁶ And we have beheld the Son, both

172. Var. "the life . . . is."

173. Var. omit "holy and."

174. Or "nature."

175. Lk 10.22.

176. Jn 14.9.

with the eyes of our hearts and with those of our flesh, when he emptied himself and came down into [468] our estate, even though he existed as God, since he is in the form of God the Father and identical to him, being begotten from him with respect to his nature. Baruch, I believe, was in fact declaring the Word when he said, "This is our God; no other can be compared to him. He has uncovered the whole way of knowledge and given it to his servant Jacob, and to Israel, whom he loved. Afterwards he appeared on earth and lived among humankind."¹⁷⁷ The divine David also expressly declares to us, "The God of gods, the Lord, has spoken and summoned the earth, from the rising of the sun to its setting. Out of Zion comes the excellence of his beauty. God, our God, will come visibly, and will not keep silent."¹⁷⁸ For he came down in the form of fire upon Mount Sinai.

Christ confirmed, however, that these events were figures, and nothing more. For the people of the Jews thought that the ineffable Being could actually be seen, when Moses stood by them at Horeb, and acted as a go-between when he assembled the congregation at Mount Sinai. When the loud blast of the trumpets sounded forth and frightened those who heard it, they thought that they were hearing the divine voice itself. But that it was foolish of them to think this, God¹⁷⁹ clearly affirmed when he said, "You have neither heard his voice, nor seen his form. And you do not have his word abiding in you, because you do not believe the one he has sent."¹⁸⁰

Surely then, we who believe have seen the Father in the Son, and we have also received the Father's Word. So too have we been redeemed, for it was not a human envoy that saved us, or an angel, neither was it the law given through Moses, but it was the Lord himself, as it is written. That what I am saying is true we may know through the things that are recorded. This is what it says: *And he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of*

¹⁷⁷. Bar 3.36–38.

¹⁷⁸. Ps 50.1–3 (49.1–3 LXX).

¹⁷⁹. Var. "Christ."

¹⁸⁰. Jn 5.37–38. The Harleian MS begins this citation as follows: "Truly, truly, I say to you."

*Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” Then Moses turned his face away, because he was afraid to look upon God.*¹⁸¹

Note here the feebleness of the law. For the God of all manifested himself, but when he stood there openly, Moses turned his face away. This was a clear indication to us that neither would the sons of Israel¹⁸² look upon the divine glory of the Son, when he would openly show it forth and lead them to an understanding of it. So he said through the mouth of Isaiah, “I was found by those who did not seek me, I became manifest to those who did not ask for me. I said, ‘Behold, here I am,’ to a nation that did not believe in me. All day I have stretched out my hands to a disobedient and rebellious people.”¹⁸³

The Jews, then, did not see the glory of Christ, because they turned away the eyes of their minds. And this, I believe, is what was spoken through the prophet about them, “They turned their back to me, and not their face.”¹⁸⁴ The divine Paul also wrote, “Until this day, at the reading of the old covenant, the same veil remains un-lifted, for only in Christ is it taken away. Indeed even to this day, [469] when Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart. But when anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”¹⁸⁵ Yet we who believe do not fear to look upon God, but as the divine Paul further said, “With unveiled face we behold the glory of the Lord.”¹⁸⁶

So Moses turned his face away. Then, when God spoke, telling him that he should go with the elders of the Israelites to the witless Pharaoh to explain that God had summoned the people of Israel to offer sacrifices to him in the desert, God added that they should plunder the Egyptians, the women taking objects of silver and gold and garments from their neighbors and from those who lived with them.

Then it says, *Moses answered, saying, “If they do not believe, or*

181. Ex 3.6.

182. Here following the Harleian text.

183. Is 65.1-2.

184. Jer 2.27. Cyril omits, accidentally no doubt, the negative in “*not* their face,” which has here been supplied.

185. 2 Cor 3.14-17.

186. 2 Cor 3.18.

heed my words, for they will say, 'God has not appeared to you,' what shall I say to them?" Then the Lord said to him, "What is that in your hand?" And he said, "A staff." The Lord said, "Throw it on the ground." He threw it on the ground and it became a snake,¹⁸⁷ and Moses fled from it. The Lord said to him, "Stretch out your hand and take hold of its tail." So he stretched out his hand and took hold of its tail, and it became a staff in his hand. "This," said the Lord, "is so that they may believe that the Lord, the God of your fathers, has appeared to you, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."¹⁸⁸

Moses was indeed afraid that the people of Israel might think him to be a liar and a babbler when he told them the God of all had appeared to him and had commanded him regarding the oppression by the Egyptians, that it was now the right time for it to be brought to an end in a powerful way. Therefore, God commanded him to perform miracles, and to do things that exceeded human nature. So when God transformed the staff into a snake, it would be understood that it really did not come about from Moses himself, but that he was one who received revelations from God above. Now the true sign, which we all believe, is the descent of the Word to become one of us, which is indicated by the staff that was cast on the ground. In what way this is so, I will now try to state, as I am able.

2. The inspired Scripture likens the Word coming forth from God to a staff, because he supports or strengthens everything. "By the Word of the Lord," it says, "the heavens were made strong,"¹⁸⁹ and, "The Lord upholds the righteous."¹⁹⁰ And we have, of course, been brought to the Father through the Son, and he shows this to be true when he says, "I will lead them with my staff."¹⁹¹

A staff, in another way, is also a symbol of kingship. So the God and Father of all reigns through the Son. It is to him that the staff of Aaron, which budded in the holy of holies, points, as does the rod that comes out of the root of Jesse. And he is

187. Or "serpent."

188. Ex 4.1-5.

189. Ps 33.6 (32.6 LXX).

190. Ps 37.17 (36.17 LXX).

191. Ezek 20.37.

the spiritual staff that comforts us all, and which wonderfully supports those who believe, in accordance with what is sung in the Psalms to the God and Father of all: "Your rod and staff, they have comforted me."¹⁹²

The staff, then, is the Son. Yet while he was in the hand of the Father and in the exaltedness of his deity, when he had not yet become one of us, we wretches continued to live in a state of ungodliness in the world. We were led astray, [472] serving the creature, and led by unclean spirits into acts of covetousness. But when he forsook, as it were, the loftiness of his own glory (something which, it may truly be said, is beneficial to contemplate), he came down to earth from heaven, as though leaving the Father's hand. He became one of us, being fashioned like those upon the earth, who are full of evil (for the Son called them evil, when he said, "If you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him").¹⁹³ We may say that he was, in effect, transformed into a snake, only because he was made in our likeness and in the same form. For if compared to the goodness of God, man is evil.¹⁹⁴ So the staff changed into a snake. For the Only-Begotten became a man, and was counted among the lawless, and was called evil along with us, even though he was good in nature, or rather he was goodness itself.

That we ourselves, however, did indeed receive the Only-Begotten, who became one of us, whereas the people of the Jews had no love for him (for they ran away from him, as it were), is made clear by the sacred Scriptures, for Moses fled from before the snake. Thinking him to be evil, they did not venture¹⁹⁵ to put their faith in him, but rather killed him, crucifying him along with evil men. That, however, they¹⁹⁶ will later take hold of Christ, and recognize that he is in no way evil, but rather that he is the spiritual support and strength of believ-

192. Ps 23.4 (22.4 LXX).

193. Mt 7.11.

194. Var. add "like the serpent."

195. Var. "they were afraid."

196. Var. "Israel."

ers, we know through what happened, for God turned back the fleeing Moses. And when he took hold of the snake, it became a staff in his hand. So then, to those who are ignorant, Christ seems to be evil, because he has the same likeness as ourselves. Yet when someone takes hold of him through faith, he is found to be a staff and a support.

Now the divine miracle involving the staff was in fact sufficiently notable so as to persuade the people of Israel, which is to say all the people of the earth, that God had visited them. But for such who were very much suffering from the inability to give heed, and for those who had no hope of being able to escape the grievous situation that they were in, there was the need for even more miracles, for these were people who had only just been called to obedience.

3. God further said clearly to the holy man, Moses, *"Put your hand inside your robe."* So he put his hand inside his robe, and his hand became leprous, like snow. Then God again said, *"Put your hand back inside your robe."* So he put his hand back inside his robe, and when he removed it from his robe, it had been restored again to the color of his flesh.¹⁹⁷

Now, on all counts, to have the ability to remove leprosy is something that is particularly divine.¹⁹⁸ The afflictions involved in this condition are so fierce that they cannot be relieved by the practices of physicians. In such circumstances the one thing needed, one might suppose, is power from above, which nothing can resist, and to which everything is possible and surmountable. Leprosy, then, is the most incurable of diseases.

Consequently, that the things [473] over which men despair, and which are impossible for us, are possible for the God of all and that there is absolutely nothing he considers difficult is seen through the healing of the leprous hand of Moses. And from this, those who were called, that is, those of the race of Israel, knew that even though they were in a situation from which it was most difficult to escape, since they were subjected to the

197. Ex 4.6–7. The phrase "inside his robe" may also be translated as "to his chest" or more quaintly "within his bosom." This is relevant to Cyril's exposition that follows.

198. Or "befitting God."

wickedness of the Egyptians, and suffering, as it were, from a fatal disease, being in slavery to them, yet the skillful physician had the knowledge and was readily able to cure the most severe sufferings, and that without the least difficulty and in a short space of time. For Moses put back his hand in his robe, and it was restored from the disease.

Another matter is, in my opinion, suggested to us here. For the people of Israel, having spent a long time in Egypt, abandoned the virtuousness they had learned from their fathers and from heaven. Instead, having adopted the local practices, they sank into the depths of depravity; as the prophet says, "They served the creature rather than the Creator."¹⁹⁹ They lapsed into every form of impurity, and had a mind that was, in effect, cold and dead. Now the leprosy symbolized impurity and deadness. So God instructed them through this miracle that if he were to receive them, so as to bring them, in effect, back into his robe, they would not have such unruly impurity, but the pollution caused by their²⁰⁰ deadness would readily be removed from them. And this is what the text is saying to us.

Now I will undertake to explain that in the hand of Moses becoming leprous and being made clean the mystery of Christ is also figuratively depicted.

The divine evangelist John well testifies that all things came into being through the Son, and without him not one thing came into being.²⁰¹ Since the Father performs everything whatsoever through the Son, for this reason the inspired Scripture calls him the hand, the arm, and the right hand of the Father. The divine Isaiah, for instance, says, "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"²⁰² For the wretched Jews continued to be unresponsive and uncontrollable, suffering much from the disease of disobedience. While David said that it was "by the word of the Lord that the heavens were established,"²⁰³ God the Father also af-

199. Cf. Rom 1.25.

200. Var. add "spiritual."

201. Cf. Jn 1.3.

202. Is 53.1.

203. Cf. Ps 33.6 (32.6 LXX).

firmed through the prophets that “with my hand I established the heavens.”²⁰⁴ And to others he declared, “I am your God who has strengthened you; and I have helped you, and have established you with my righteous right hand.”²⁰⁵ So it is the custom of the inspired Scripture to call the Son a “hand.”

Now note that the hand of Moses was hidden within his robe,²⁰⁶ and then, when it was brought out, it appeared leprous. Then once it was placed within his robe again, it was immediately healed of the affliction. We shall discover the meaning of such an action by considering the mystery²⁰⁷ and the manner of the Son becoming man, and by carefully examining how and in what way this took place.

The Son was indeed in the bosom of God the Father, and through him the Father made all things. For the Son himself [476] is the raised arm, the all-powerful hand, and the wonderful right hand. But when he, in a certain manner, took leave of his own place, becoming man, he took to himself our infirmities, in accordance with what the prophet says,²⁰⁸ and to him was attributed our character, and he came in our impurity. For the nature of man is impure to God, since what the prophet Isaiah says is true, that “all our righteousness is as a filthy rag.”²⁰⁹ So then, as touching his human nature, the one who is all-pure and who dwells in unapproachable light came with the appearance²¹⁰ of impurity.

Now the wretched Jews had gone so far astray that they therefore called him a drunkard and a Samaritan, and one who was born of fornication, and even a sinner also. For they said to the man who had been blind from birth when he was healed, “Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner.”²¹¹ But they would never, I believe, have been so foolish as to say such

204. Is 45.12.

205. Is 41.10.

206. Or “chest,” “bosom” (cf. n. 197 above).

207. Var. add “of Christ.”

208. Cf. Is 53.4.

209. Is 64.6 (64.5 LXX).

210. *dokêsis*, also “suspicion,” “repute.”

211. Jn 9.24.

things and to open their untamed mouths against him if they had known he was God in nature.

He, however, who had been born as a man with the appearance of impurity, when he came to the end of the most wonderfully devised divine economy among us, finally ascended to the Father, and was in his bosom, and only then did he rid himself of the appearance of deadness and impurity that he had when he was with us. So he is glorified as God; he receives praise from all as Lord, as the holy of holies, as the one who illuminates creation, and who himself provides the spirits of men upon the earth²¹² with the ability to overcome the one who works all impurity.

Now the Son, in the divine economy, took up human nature on our account, was born under the law,²¹³ and was counted with the transgressors.²¹⁴ That he then returned again to the natural honor and glory that were his originally, he himself affirms when he says to the Father in heaven, "Father, glorify me with the glory which I had with you before the world was."²¹⁵ You see that he wished to do away with those things that had intruded into creation, and was not unwilling to undergo the economy of his Incarnation, but then he hastened to the glory of the Godhead and to all-surpassing honor.

This is why the blessed Paul said, "Though we once knew Christ according to the flesh, now we know him no longer in that way."²¹⁶ For he came back to life from the dead, and ascended to the Father with his flesh. Yet, it says, we no longer know him according to the flesh, that is, no longer in flesh subject to passions, by which I mean the natural passions which are innocent of sin.²¹⁷ For before the precious cross, he is said to have hungered, to have grown weary from journeys, to have experienced sorrow, and then to have endured death itself upon a tree on our account. But now we do not know him in these

212. Var. "the spirits above and those upon the earth."

213. Cf. Gal 4.4.

214. Cf. Is 53.12; Lk 22.37.

215. Jn 17.5.

216. 2 Cor 5.16.

217. *anenklētois*, "blameless," "without reproach."

things. For having died once, he no longer dies.²¹⁸ For Christ is incorruptible, being life by nature and the giver of life, because he shows forth the life that comes from the Father.

4. So after the miraculous performance relating to the leprous hand, God appointed a third sign that was even more powerful. For he further said, *"But if they do not believe in these two signs, or heed [477] your voice, take some water from the river, and pour it out on the dry ground; and the water that you take from the river will become blood on the dry ground."*²¹⁹

Here we see again the unbelief of the Jews foretold. For they are always dull and slow to understand, and it is only with difficulty that they can be brought to the truth. For they did not believe the way in which he took on human nature, nor in the miraculous things that were performed among them. It was only after the last sign that they finally came to believe, though it was not all of them perhaps, but the remnant chosen by grace, as the blessed Paul writes.²²⁰ And what was that last sign? It was the death of Christ upon a tree, and his immediate resurrection that followed his death.

That the death of the Savior and the great and wonderful mystery of his resurrection from the dead were given as a sign to the people of Israel is evident from the Savior's very own words. For the Pharisees once came to him after he had displayed numerous signs, and, putting on a pretense, they said, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from you." And he answered them, 'An evil and adulterous generation seeks a sign, yet no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet. For as Jonah was in the belly of the sea monster for three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights.'²²¹

Now, that the death of Emmanuel won over not only many of the Jews, but many of the Gentiles also, one can see without any difficulty. For Christ also once said, "When I am lifted up

218. Cf. Rom 6.9–10.

219. Ex 4.9.

220. Cf. Rom 11.5.

221. Mt 12.38–40.

from the earth, I will draw all to myself,"²²² and further, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."²²³ Do you see how he shows us by means of a clear illustration the fruit that comes from death? The words of the Savior, therefore, show us the last sign of all, meaning that it is not only those of Israel who put their faith in him, but also, as I said, those from the other multitude, that of the Gentiles.

In what way, then, is this signified? It says, "*Take some water from the river, and pour it out on the dry ground; and the water that you take from the river will become blood on the dry ground.*" Now the water is a figure, or a symbol, of life, for it is most necessary for life, and is most essential for those upon the earth. So then, as with water from a river, the Son, being born from the Father, who gives life to all things, is truly life himself. For just as he is light from light, so also is he life from life. That he did not in fact have a separate existence, but was himself of the nature of God the Father, Moses was taught, in no lesser way than we ourselves also are, for it says, "*Take some water from the river.*"

Then Moses was ordered to pour out the water on the land. This is a figure of the mystery of the Incarnation. For the Only-Begotten, he who is life, being begotten and, as it were, flowing forth from the life of God the Father, was in a way mingled with humanity taken from the earth, as the water doubtlessly mixed with the soil. [480] For in Christ "all the fullness of deity dwelt bodily."²²⁴ He joined, in effect, human nature to himself, in a way that no one would be able to understand or express.

Yet the water turned into blood. For the one who is by nature life, that is, the Word from God the Father, in the economic union, that is, with respect to the flesh, did indeed appear in complete humanity, in the nature that is ours, so as to undergo death itself. For we affirm that he died for our sakes, not suffering death in his own nature (for he himself, being life, can in no way die), but he appropriated the death of his flesh as his

²²². Jn 12.32. Cyril puts "all things" (*panta*) for the original "all people" (*pantas*).

²²³. Jn 12.24.

²²⁴. Cf. Col 2.9.

own. Observe that if Moses had not poured out the water upon the land, it would not have turned into blood, which is clearly symbolic of his death. For considered apart from his flesh, the Word from God is life and life-giving. But when he dwelt in flesh, only then is he said to have died in the manner of men.

This is an extraordinary and manifest sign, by means of which the remnant of Israel is drawn to faith, and the multitude of the nations is also summoned. For who, on seeing death incapacitated, which was once so fearful and loathsome to those upon the earth, on seeing corruption removed, and human nature restored to the hope of unending life, would not be converted to a ready obedience? For as we died with Adam, so we have been raised with Christ. The divine Paul testifies to us of this when he writes, "For as in Adam we all die, even so in Christ we all will be made alive."²²⁵ For he purchased us with his own blood, and counted his life to be an exchange for the life of all.

5. Now although God had performed such awesome wonders, Moses was distressed and overcome by timidity, and he did not yet feel bold about his mission. That he was to go before Pharaoh, as God commanded, and expressly declare that he should let Israel go to sacrifice to God in the desert, filled him with no end of terror. So he spoke further, confessing openly that he was lacking in words, and that he had a speech defect. He said, "*For I have never been eloquent, neither recently, nor in the past, nor since you began to speak to your servant. I stammer and am slow of speech.*"²²⁶

Moses plainly affirmed that he was inadequate to bring about redemption from the yoke of servitude, and he said, "*Please, Lord, appoint another person, someone capable, whom you can send.*"²²⁷ And when God promised to give him the ability to speak, as he himself is the giver of wisdom and speech, Moses made further excuses, saying that he should appoint someone else who was able to do it. This displeased God, for it says, *And God was very angry with Moses, and said, "Is there not Aaron your*

225. 1 Cor 15.22.

226. Ex 4.10.

227. Ex 4.13.

brother, the Levite? I know that he will indeed speak for you."²²⁸ Then he adds, "*He will be your mouth, and you will be to him as God.*"²²⁹

Do you see the slowness of speech that was foreshadowed long ago by the divine Moses? For the law was not sufficiently able to utter the divine oracles, nor was it of noble or refined speech, so as to impart accurate knowledge of those things that are profitable, [481] as was indeed the case with Christ, the true Levite, of whom Aaron was the type. For the law given through Moses was barely able to deliver the rudiments of the oracles of God. It was an elementary teacher for infants, an instructor of the foolish, presenting to us through types and shadows merely the faintest knowledge of what ought to be done. While he who is truly most sufficient, our great priest who is able to carry out his mission, is Christ, who showed forth the reality set free from the shadows. For he is not slow or halting of speech, or inept with words like Moses, but he is extremely eloquent, especially as he is the Word of God the Father, the Word of wisdom.

Observe, then, how the law is inadequate for delivering those in bondage to the spiritual Pharaoh, which is Satan. See too that the divine Moses could not provide any benefit to the earth, nor indeed could he acquire the most eminent glory with respect to his virtues, unless Christ were with him helping him. You can perceive that this is so, and also that what has been said by us is true on account of its being connected to Aaron. Moses discoursed, while Aaron articulated the message clearly. For unless the law is interpreted spiritually, with Christ opening up to us the matters it contains, what is revealed will be dark and obscure to its hearers.

So then, as the Jews did not have the interpreter, which is Christ, of the things of Moses, they remained ignorant. That is why the divine Paul said, "Until this day, at the reading of the old covenant, the same veil remains un-lifted, for only in Christ is it taken away. Indeed, even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart. But when anyone turns to the Lord,

²²⁸. Ex 4.14. In the latter part the Hebrew reads, "I know that he can speak well."

²²⁹. Ex 4.16.

the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”²³⁰

The God of all therefore spoke truly to Moses, that teacher of sacred matters, regarding Aaron, when he said, *“he will indeed speak for you; he will be your mouth, and you will be to him as God.”* Of course, we are not saying that Moses was nearer to God and more intimate with him than Emmanuel. For this one is the Son, and he is of God the Father with respect to his nature. Yet he is the one who took up residence among us, and is even spoken of as being genuinely human. He then would be considered as the one who was *“to him as God.”* For Christ, as man, heeded the oracles of the law and kept the teachings of Moses. He was circumcised on the eighth day, and paid the two drachma tax, even though he was free since he was by nature a Son. He also ate the Passover, even though he himself was the true Lamb that takes away the sin of the world.²³¹ So this is why it is said of Moses that he would be *“to him as God.”*

Moses further showed that Israel would disregard the divine signs performed by Christ, and that he would not impart faith by the miracles of themselves. And so we take the figure of Moses as representing the people of Israel, as they were called by him, and were instructed in the laws by him. Surely then, the fact that the law is inadequate to bring about redemption, and that the precious blood of Christ is sufficient for us to this purpose (for through him [484] alone has death been conquered), has most readily been made evident from these matters.

6. Now the divine Moses departed from the land of the Midianites, taking his wife and children, and eventually came to Egypt, so fulfilling precisely what God had instructed him to do.

When he was still a short distance from the land of the Egyptians, the God of all said to him, *“When you go back to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders that I have put in your power.”*²³² And next he said, *“You shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the Lord: Israel is my firstborn son. I said to you, ‘Let my people go that*

²³⁰ 2 Cor 3.14–17.

²³¹ Cf. Jn 1.29.

²³² Ex 4.21.

they may serve me," but you were not willing to let them go. See then, I will slay your firstborn son."²³³ Then it says, *And it happened that an angel of the Lord met Moses in his lodging on the way,*²³⁴ *and sought to kill him. So taking a stone, Zipporah cut off the uncircumcised flesh of her son, and she fell at his feet, and said, "The blood of the circumcision of my son has been stopped."* Then the angel left her, because she said, *"The blood of the circumcision of my son has been stopped."*²³⁵

Now an angel came in our form and sought to kill Moses, but he was just about thwarted when Zipporah circumcised her son, Gershom, who was also the firstborn, and whose name means "sojourner." Why the destroyer tried to kill Moses the sacred Scripture does not explicitly state, but it is only by this circumcision of the child that he was prepared to be made to leave. So the figure again makes it clear how death was conquered by the blood of Christ, and so the holy multitude of the fathers, or rather the whole of the race that was there from the beginning before Christ, has been saved. For he died for all, and the death of all has been undone in him. For it was not by the blood of the prophets, but by the blood of the much younger²³⁶ Christ, that we escape the Destroyer together with him. "For to this end," it says, "Christ died and came to life: that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living."²³⁷

If it said, however, that the destroyer attacked Gershom, rather than the blessed Moses, you would not understand this. For it is not by means of circumcision according to the law, that is, physical circumcision of the flesh, that death is banished, but through the circumcision that takes place in Christ, through the Spirit. This he enacts upon his new people, the firstborn, who are indeed a "sojourner" upon the earth, and yet are enrolled for the heavenly life above, and whom the spiritu-

233. Ex 4.22-23. Cyril's reading here differs from that preserved in the LXX known to us today, in which these last two clauses appear with a conditional sense: "but if you are not willing to let them go, see I will slay your firstborn son."

234. Var. omit "on the way."

235. Ex 4.24-26. At the beginning of v. 26, instead of the words "left her," the LXX has "left him."

236. Or "more recent."

237. Rom 14.9.

al Zipporah, that is, the church, she who is of Midian and the Gentiles, circumcised with a stone. This stone is a figure of the Spirit, since it is very strong and indestructible, as well as being made from rock. For it is the Spirit of Christ, and Christ was a rock, as the wise Paul wrote.²³⁸

One also ought to be aware that Joshua, who was born sometime after Moses, circumcised the men of Israel with stone knives, portraying to us in a figure the circumcision without hands enacted in Christ, by which death is defeated. This is [485] the spiritual circumcision of evil, the putting off of base lusts. For with regard to the circumcision according to the flesh, the divine Paul wrote, "Circumcision is nothing."²³⁹ And the words that he declared to us are wise and sacred, when he said, "You have been circumcised in Christ,"²⁴⁰ through whom and with whom be glory to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

238. Cf. 1 Cor 10.4.

239. 1 Cor 7.19.

240. Cf. Col 2.11.

BOOK TEN: EXODUS, PART 3

Concerning the rock that was struck



ENTER THROUGH the narrow gate,” Christ declared to his friends.¹ In describing this ongoing² situation, he calls the entrance a gate that is “narrow” and “hard,” and he speaks of that worthy perseverance which is beyond all account, through which those who wish to be able to set their minds on the things above are most especially distinguished, and are made glorious through the training that leads to well-being³ and virtuousness. For as valor is displayed in battles and testifies to the manliness of the one serving⁴ as a soldier, so the one who is strong and noble, that is, able to produce the virtuousness that is pleasing to God, the one who is illustrious, eminent, and worthy of all commendation, is especially well displayed as having the ability to endure the difficulties that arise from undergoing trials. And so the disciple of the Savior affirmed that such a person should be admired in every way, saying, “Blessed is the person who perseveres under trial; for when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life.”⁵ And those who lacked the strength to do this, and who have yet gained such eminent glory, say, “You have tested us, O God; you have refined us with fire as silver is refined. You laid afflictions upon our backs; you set men upon our heads. We went through

1. Mt 7.13–14.

2. Or “miserable.”

3. Or “goodness of soul.”

4. Var. add “well.”

5. Jas 1.12.

fire and water, but you brought us to a place of respite.”⁶ For hardship ends in rejoicing, and afflictions open up the straight way for those who nobly strive to enter.

While God, the one with knowledge of hidden things, knows everything before it comes into being (for to him “everything is naked and exposed”),⁷ he nevertheless waits for the outcome of the deeds and strength of those who undergo trial at some time. This is so that they might not only appear to him as worthy of honor with respect to his foreknowledge, but that having shown much valor, and their virtue having been witnessed through their actual deeds, they might be applauded by both angels and men. This is why the blessed Paul said concerning himself and the other saints, who had contended well and conquered, [488] “They have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men.”⁸

Now Israel was tested in many ways, so that their debilitating weakness might be manifest, and that God might be admired for his great goodness in that he endured those who do wrong, and more so in that the mystery⁹ was portrayed to us in shadow in connection with each of the things that happened.

So, having just completed our discussion relating to the quails and the manna, we have shown that Israel was suffering greatly from infirmity and the love of pleasure. And we see that it is not long before they are once again found to be agitating. For this is what is written: *All the congregation of Israel departed from the Desert of Zin by their encampments, through the word of the Lord, and they made camp at Rephidim. But there was no water for the people to drink. Then the people spoke evil of Moses, saying, “Give us water that we may drink.” And Moses said to them, “Why do you speak evil of me? And why do you put the Lord to the test?” So the people thirsted for water in that place, and grumbled against Moses, saying, “Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to kill us, our children, and our animals with thirst?” Then Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, “What shall I do with this people? They will stone me at any moment.” And the*

6. Ps 66.10–12 (65.10–12 LXX).

7. Cf. Heb 4.13.

8. 1 Cor 4.9.

9. Var. add “of Christ.”

Lord said to Moses, "Pass before this people, and take with you some of the elders of the people; take the staff in your hand with which you struck the river, and go. Behold, I stand there before you come, upon the rock at Horeb. And you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people shall drink." So Moses did this before the people of Israel. He called the name of that place "Testing" and "Speaking Evil,"¹⁰ because the people of Israel spoke evil, and because they put the Lord to the test, saying, "Is the Lord among us, or not?"¹¹

This is what the divine oracle says to us in Exodus, while in Numbers it presents a more extensive account, which I think is also necessary to set down, since by making a good and thorough examination of each of them, we shall acquire ample knowledge of the events that happened long ago as figures¹² and, more than this, a knowledge of the beauty of the matters to be contemplated spiritually.

So it is written: "And the people of Israel, the whole congregation, came to the Wilderness of Zin in the first month, and the people stayed in Kadesh. There Miriam died, and she was buried there. Now there was no water for the congregation, and they gathered against Moses and Aaron. The people spoke evil of Moses, saying, 'Would that we had perished when our brothers perished before the Lord! Why have you¹³ brought the congregation of the Lord into this wilderness to kill us and our children?¹⁴ And why have you led us up out of Egypt that we should come into this evil place, a place that is not sown, nor are there figs, or vines, or pomegranates, nor is there water to drink?' Then Moses and Aaron went from before the congregation to the door [489] of the tent of testimony. They fell upon their faces, and the glory of the Lord appeared to them. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'Take the staff, and assemble the congregation, you and Aaron your brother. And you shall speak to the rock in their presence, and it will give

10. In Hebrew Massah ("testing") and Meribah ("contention").

11. Ex 17.1-7.

12. *tupikōs*, that is to say, in the form of types.

13. The second person "you" here is singular in Cyril, but plural in the original Hebrew and LXX, whereas the verb of the immediately following question ("why have you led us up . . .") is plural in all three texts.

14. LXX: "and our cattle" (as MT).

forth its waters. So you shall bring forth water for them out of the rock, and you shall provide drink for the congregation and their cattle.’ Then Moses took the staff which was before the Lord, as the Lord commanded, and Moses and Aaron assembled the congregation before the rock. He said to them, ‘Listen to me, you rebels; shall we bring you water out of this rock?’ Moses raised his hand and struck the rock twice with the staff. Water came forth abundantly, and the congregation and their cattle drank. Then the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, ‘Because you did not believe me, to show me holy before the people of Israel, therefore you will not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.’ This is the water of strife, because the people of Israel spoke evil before the Lord, and he proved himself holy among them.”¹⁵

The people were indeed going through a dry land, traversing a region greatly lacking in water, and they were making much of the hardships of the journey. In a short time there occurred some of the usual grief, and they raised an insufferable outcry against Moses and Aaron. Although they had been spectators of so many wonderful miracles, and through the trial itself had well learned of the surpassing excellence of the divine power, they still feared that God might somehow be unable to administer to them the necessities of life, to provide them with food and to produce supplies of water everywhere they went. Their cravenness got the better of them, since their thinking was childish and unmanly, and as a little something had happened to distress them, they immediately rushed at their leader,¹⁶ and cried out in a profane manner, for he was indeed their mediator also, and through him they had been called to freedom.

They regarded as blessed those who had perished earlier when they were in the grip of cravenness, overcome by the desire for the meat of Egypt, and having at that time devoured the quails that brought ruin upon them, they had been condemned to death. That is why these others said, “Would that we had died when our brothers perished before the Lord! Why

15. Nm 20.1–13.

16. Greek, *paidagôgô*.

did you bring us¹⁷ up into this wilderness to kill us and our cattle?" O what a feeble mind, what wretched thinking, and what a mind given to much despair! They quickly came to long after the dreadful things of Egypt as though they were better than the things of God. The former bitter yoke of slavery was now sweet; no longer was it intolerable, nor was Pharaoh harsh. The clay bricks were not hateful, nor was the cruelty of the taskmasters, but everything now seemed pleasant. For it was the feeble state of their minds that enticed them to fall into this folly.

Now hear, as seems appropriate, the accusations made against Moses, the mediator, for they said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt that we should come into this evil place, a place that is not sown, [492] nor are there figs, or vines, or pomegranates, nor is there water to drink?" Note how they are carried away into cravenness, and were unrestrainedly inclined to temporal pleasures. They applied themselves to worldly delights, and were concerned to satisfy their stomachs. They despised the hope, and did not take possession of the land promised to the fathers, not understanding that it is always the case that hardships procure the choicest gifts. For it is not without difficulty that one may acquire the most excellent gifts.

Israel, therefore, did not know how to act nobly,¹⁸ nor how to withstand rigorously the assaults of the passions, since this was not reserved for those under the law, but it was rather pre-arranged for those in Christ. Although, however, they deserved the indignation of God and were not worthy that he should supply them with water, and even though they had descended to such a level of perverseness, in order that they might yet benefit in the matter of faith by other miracles, God commanded Moses to strike the rock with the staff.

But God was not unaware that Moses himself would soon be made fainthearted by the rebelliousness of the people and would stumble in the matter of faith. Therefore in Exodus it says, "*Take with you some of the elders of the people; take the staff in your hand with which you struck the river, and go. Behold, I stand there before you come, upon the rock at Horeb. And you shall strike the rock,*

17. Var. "the congregation of the Lord"; as Nm 20.4.

18. Var. "act creditably."

and water will come out of it, and let my people drink." In Numbers, however, it says, "Take the staff, and assemble the congregation, you and Aaron your brother. And speak to the rock in their presence, and it will give forth its waters for them. So you shall bring forth water for them out of the rock, and you shall provide drink for the congregation."

Observe that he strengthens Moses's faith by reminding him of the wonders performed in Egypt, saying, "*Take the staff in your hand with which you struck the river.*" It is as though he were saying, "The staff which turned the great river into blood by the ineffable power of the God who accomplishes such things will very easily bring water even from the rock." Then he affirms this in another manner, adding, "*Behold, I stand there.*" For "you will not be alone," he says, "nor will you again be the one to perform the miracle. But I myself will indicate the rock which is to be the source of many streams of water. I will make the prior preparations for the miracle, and I will wait for your help. Speak to the rock, and I myself will be the power in your words." Even though, however, it was necessary to embolden him by saying such things, Moses was weak. He said, "Listen to me, you rebels; shall we bring you water out of this rock?" Then he struck the rough piece of rock twice with the staff, for nothing of what was expected to happen would come to pass unless the rock happened to be struck. He struck it twice, even though some elements in Egypt were changed into blood by stretching forth the staff just once.

Nevertheless, even though he was greatly angered by these events, God gave the spring of water, so that weakness might not be ascribed to him in the apprehension of the people, who lacked understanding. But Moses was rebuked. It says, "You will not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them, because you did not believe me, to show me holy before the people of Israel."

Let us now come once more and refashion the form of the literal sense into that of the mystery of Christ. [493] And as we work our way through the divine Scriptures, let us speak of those things that are appropriate, making every effort that the direction of our interpretation be guided by the sacred writings.

2. So in the first month after Miriam had died, the people were thirsty. Then, when God commanded him, the divine Moses struck the rock with the staff, while the elders of the people were present with him, and Aaron also. They spoke to the rock, and the spring of water poured forth abundantly. So Moses provided drink for the congregation and for their cattle, as it is written.

What may we say, then, is represented figuratively by the death of Miriam, or how is she actually to be interpreted? And why was it necessary to give an explanation saying that she died in the first month? We shall, then, take Moses as representing the law, and Aaron the priesthood, while to the person of Miriam we shall assign the role of the ministration under the law. So God said through the holy man to the unrestrained Jerusalem, "I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam."¹⁹ Do you see who is placed alongside Moses and Aaron in the leadership of Israel? With the all-wise Moses serving as mediator, and Aaron being the one who presided, that is to say, who had the honor to serve as priest under the ministration expressed in types, Israel according to the flesh then benefited in the service offered to God.²⁰ But that the role of Miriam must be added alongside that of Moses and Aaron is very readily understood from what happened at the Red Sea. When Pharaoh perished with his bodyguard and drowned with all his army, Moses sang the song of thanksgiving and composed the hymn of praise. Then the women went out dancing, and Miriam took her timbrel, as it is written,²¹ making, one may suppose, a loud and clear sound with her companions. Yet this was a detailed²² figure, expressed in types, of the true matter for contemplation. For the manner of the song and the sound of timbrels indicated the fact that Moses himself, representing the law, and Miriam also with him, representing the ministration of types and shadows, both declare the marvelous and most admirable power of the God who has dominion over all. Surely then, one may

19. Mi 6.4.

20. Var. "from their relationship with God."

21. Ex 15.20.

22. Or "subtle."

confer upon Miriam the role of the ministration under the law, just as we may surely confer upon Moses the role of the law itself, and upon Aaron that of the priesthood.

Now when Miriam died in the first month, that is, at the beginning of the year according to the laws of the Hebrews, when the mystery of the holy Passover also takes place, the people were thirsty. For in the first month of the year, which is also called the month of new things, the ministration of types and shadows in effect died, was gathered in,²³ and was removed from the midst. How was this so? Because the Only-Begotten Word of God in human form shined forth his light upon us, as though it were the month of new things. This is why he said, "I myself am the one speaking: 'Here I am, how beautiful on the mountains,'"²⁴ as in the month of new things.²⁵ He summoned the church out of the nations, saying this: "Rise up, come, my companion, my fair one, my dove. For behold, the winter has passed, the rains are over and gone. The flowers have appeared in our land; [496] the time of pruning has arrived."²⁶ For in Christ we have blossomed up into newness of life, and the time of his advent is shown forth to us as the spiritual springtime, when he makes human nature to bloom and be fruitful.

For at that time, the time when the ministration of shadows was gathered in, as when Miriam died, the people were thirsty and were in lack of spiritual water. Yet the streams of Christ flowed forth abundantly, by which I mean the oracles given through him and the mystical instruction in spirit and in truth. The divine Paul understood this and wrote, "I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of the fact that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses, in the cloud and in the sea. All ate the same spiritual food, and drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed, and that rock

23. Or "wrapped up," as, for instance, a dead body in a shroud.

24. Is 52.6–7.

25. It is not clear where Cyril intends the citation to end. The Latin column in PG 69 also places this last clause in quotation marks. The Isaianic text, however, certainly does not continue in this way. If this clause is derived from another biblical text, the source remains unidentifiable.

26. Song 2.10–12.

was Christ."²⁷ He is compared to a rock because he is indestructible and unmovable, for the divine and supreme Being stands firm in his own virtues.²⁸

Now it is necessary to examine the manner in which the water was given. For when the elders of the law had assembled, and Aaron too was present, words were spoken to the rock. But Moses also struck it twice. So too, when the elders of the people and the priests gathered together, those instructed in the law, that is, the Israel that had been represented by the person of Moses, they spoke against Christ, accusing him before Pilate, and they cried out profanely, "Away with him, away with him! Crucify him!"²⁹ And then they struck out with two blows. For they killed the Prince of Life, and secondly, they added to the first blow in that they also wished to be assured that he remained among the dead. Yet Christ in fact came back to life, having trampled down death. So when the soldiers who had been posted by them to guard the tomb came and told them this, they frantically charged them to say that the disciples had secretly stolen him, so explaining away the wonderful mystery of the resurrection. There was, then, this second blow.

Yet the rock gave abundant streams of water. Although Israel did in fact mistreat Christ, he still provided drink for the whole synagogue, and flooded the world with sacred and divine springs. For thus he promised to give us himself, saying through the prophet, "Behold, I will turn to them as a river of peace, and as a torrent that deluges them with the glory of the nations."³⁰ David also sings, "The flowing of the river makes glad the city of God."³¹ And he likewise says to God the heavenly Father himself, "How you have multiplied your mercy, O God! The sons of men will have hope in the shelter of your wings. They will drink from the abundance of your house, and you will give them drink from the river of your delights, for with you is the fountain of life."³²

27. 1 Cor 10.1-4.

28. Lit. "good things."

29. Jn 19.15.

30. Is 66.12.

31. Ps 46.4 (45.5 LXX).

32. Ps 36.7-9 (35.9-10 LXX).

Note how when their unbelief comes rushing in, Moses strikes the rock with the staff. For when Israel refused to believe in Christ, [497] they acted badly. So Moses was rebuked, and Aaron with him also. It says, "You will not bring the people of Israel into the land which I have given them." So it is not the law consisting of types that will lead us into the inheritance of the saints, into the true³³ land of promise, nor is it the priesthood under the law, which lay weak in shadows. For we shall not please God through offerings of blood, nor shall we appear beautiful to him if ours is an earthly glory. Rather, we shall enter into the heavenly city, and come into the inheritance of the fathers, with Christ as our leader, through whom and with whom be glory to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

*Concerning the descent of God upon Mount Sinai,
and Israel before the mountain*

1. To the multitude of the Jews who did not accept redemption by faith, but who rather greatly despised the value of his oracles, believing that the law given through Moses would suffice them as the only way of having a relationship with God, our Lord Jesus Christ declared, "No one comes to the Father except through me,"³⁴ and also, "I am the way,"³⁵ and "I am the door."³⁶ When he says these things he is most certainly not speaking falsely, since he is the truth. And God the Father can be approached in no other way except through the one who is the only Son by nature. For he who knows the Son will as a matter of course know the Father also from whom he came forth. Therefore, he said to those who chose not to believe in him, who claimed to know the God of all, "If you knew me, you would know my Father also."³⁷

33. *alethesteran*, is a comparative form, meaning "truer," "more genuine," "more real."

34. Jn 14.6.

35. Ibid.

36. Jn 10.9.

37. Jn 8.19.

Now Moses in fact was a tutor to those of former times; he was a mediator and guide, an emissary bringing laws from God. He was noble indeed among the saints, for he heard God expressly telling him, "I know you above all others, and you have found favor with me."³⁸ Yet the law was weak, not being of such a nature so as fully to effect a relationship with God. This we rather obtain through the mediatorship of Christ, for "he himself is our peace," as the Scriptures say.³⁹ In him alone is there perfection of knowledge and every good gift, and it is he who through his own self, in effect, has brought us to the Father. Therefore, he said, "I desire that as you and I are one, they also might be one in us."⁴⁰

Moses, then, was indeed a mediator, yet he was so as a type and a shadow. The real mediator is Christ, to whom we are firmly joined, since it is true that he came down into our estate and became a man, so that we ourselves "might become partakers of his divine nature,"⁴¹ being united to him by sharing in the Holy Spirit and by the grace of God.

We shall learn further about this if we turn the eyes of our minds to the sacred Scriptures. For it says, *The Lord said to Moses, "Go down and warn the people, and consecrate them today and tomorrow. Have them wash their clothes, and let them be ready by the third day. For on the third day the Lord will descend on Mount Sinai before all the people. You shall make the people stand apart on all sides, and say, 'Be careful that you do not go up into the mountain, nor touch any part of it. Everyone who touches the mountain shall surely die. No person's hand shall touch it, for he will be stoned with stones, or shot with an arrow; [500] whether man or beast, he shall not live. When the sounds and the trumpets and the cloud depart from the mountain, they shall come up on the mountain.'"*⁴²

For when the people of Israel were laboring in Egypt and had lapsed into the false worship of the Egyptians, they worshiped objects of human invention, and things made of stone;

38. Ex 33.12.

39. Eph 2.14.

40. Cf. Jn 10.30; 17.21.

41. 2 Pt 1.4.

42. Ex 19.10-13.

that is to say, they offered worship to things of different materials. They were suffering from that pitiable error about which the prophet said, "They say to a piece of wood, 'You are my God,' and to a stone, 'You gave me birth.'"⁴³ It was necessarily the case then, as the Maker wished to bring them out of that former profane and false worship to a knowledge of the truth, in order that it might not seem that they were being deceived by the words of Moses to worship a God who did not exist, that he should deem it fit and helpful for them to receive the divine revelations in images also. For things that are seen tend to be apprised with a stronger faith. He therefore promised to come down visibly in the near future.

So, in order that the people might understand what a privilege it was to be invited to this event, in which they would become hearers and spectators of God, that is to say, of his divine and ineffable glory, it was absolutely necessary for him to require their most stringent purification. It was fitting for them to be free from fleshly uncleanness and to be properly dressed for this occasion, so that the way the festal gathering was held might be correct and appropriate. For a wondrous festal occasion is truly to be deemed worthy of such manifest consideration.⁴⁴ He further ordered them to be pure, and to abstain from relations with women, and for them to exercise self-control in readiness for the third day. He also instructed them to wash their clothes.

When these preparations were completed, *On the third day, it says, when morning came, there were thunders and lightnings, and dark clouds upon Mount Sinai. There was the loud sound of a trumpet, and all the people in the camp were terrified. Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. Mount Sinai was completely covered in smoke because God had descended upon it in fire, and the smoke went up like the smoke of a furnace. All the people were absolutely astounded. And as the sound of the trumpet was getting louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him with a voice.*⁴⁵

43. Jer 2.27. Cyril replaces Jeremiah's "You are my father" with "You are my God" from Is 44.17.

44. Var. "honor."

45. Ex 19.16-19.

Now the supreme Being who dwells on high, the one who transcends all that is created, is in fact scarcely perceived by the mind. So when, to Israel's benefit, he came to enact the matter of divine revelation through things that were more visible, it was thereupon necessary that the character of that economy should include many elements that inspired fear. For *thunders and lightnings* issued forth together, and dark clouds gathered, so that even the creation appeared to be serving the God of all, the darkness also acting as his servant.

Thus Moses brought Israel out trembling, and they stood by the mountain. One might suppose he had previously instructed them that they should suffer no harm, but would rather encounter the good and beneficent Master. As the mountain was on fire, smoke [501] was spreading out directly over it, and there was the shrill sound of a trumpet, thin at first, but soon building up to a fuller and stronger sound. Then the God of all came down with the appearance of fire upon Mount Sinai. *And the Lord called Moses to the top of the mountain. So Moses went up, and the Lord said to Moses, "Go down, and warn the people so that they do not at any time come near to God to look, and many of them fall. And let the priests who draw near to the Lord God consecrate themselves, lest the Lord destroy them." Then Moses said to God, "The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai, for you yourself warned us, saying, 'Set bounds for the mountain and consecrate it.'" So the Lord said to him, "Go down, and come back up with Aaron; but do not let the priests and the people come up to God lest the Lord destroy some of them."*⁴⁶

God commanded that only the mediator, Moses, should go up the mountain, but he did not let any of the others come up. The mountain is shown to be inaccessible to them, and he threatened death should anyone care to slight his command. He was not intending to be perceived as cruel or harsh, or as unapproachable, for to think such would be quite absurd. Rather, it was in order that they might know and understand that although God is utterly transcendent and supremely eminent, they were able to be near to his glory and dignity.

There is also another reason for this. For the Israelites had been brought up on the practices of the Egyptians and had

46. Ex 19.20-24.

learned that access to the shrines of unclean demons⁴⁷ was not in fact allowed to those who wanted, but that this was only permitted to those who had been chosen and been purified, one may suppose, according to the laws that existed among them, by taking part in secret revelries. It would thus be most untoward that the Israelites should then consider it nothing to draw near to the God of all, and to cast their eyes upon such grand and hallowed places in which his divine and ineffable glory appeared.

Yet there is something else here, for I would say that we ought to seek diligently for what is profitable in a number of ways. It cannot have been the case that equal honor should be granted by God to both people and leader, to the one who was to serve as tutor, the minister of the law to whom the laws were given, and to those under his authority. On the contrary, it was better and wise to allot the honor to him in a special way, and this was most beneficial for those placed under him. That what I am saying is true, you can understand from elsewhere. For the Master of all said to Moses, the expounder of mysteries, "*Behold, I am coming to you in a pillar of cloud, so that you may hear⁴⁸ me speaking to you, and that they may believe you ever after.*"⁴⁹ Everything, then, was enacted prudently and in order.

2. As I said, however, there was in the earliest times a certain shadowy portrayal of the visitation of our Savior, who would come to illumine those upon the earth on the third day, in the last period of time, as it were, in which the Word became flesh and shone upon us, in accordance with the Scriptures, and who proclaimed ahead of time⁵⁰ the eventual cleansing to be attained by him and through him for those who believe. For it says, "*Warn the people, and let them be ready by the third day. For on the third day the Lord will descend upon Mount Sinai.*"

Now what the manner of preparation was Moses explained, [504] saying, "*For three days do not draw near to a woman,*"⁵¹ and

47. That is to say, the gods of Egypt.

48. Cyril's citation errs at this point. It ought to read: "so that the people may hear me speaking to you."

49. Ex 19.9.

50. Var. add "through the law."

51. Ex 19.15.

he also distinctly affirmed that even their clothes were to be washed. When it says that they should not sleep with women but should cease relations with them, the mortification of the pleasures of the flesh is especially well signified. And when it says that they were to wash their clothes, cleansing through water is being portrayed to us, and it is evident that this indicates the removal of defilement through the Spirit. For, as the blessed Paul writes, those who choose to set their minds on the things of Christ, and who walk in the Spirit, "have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires,"⁵² and they "put to death the members of their earthly nature: sexual immorality, uncleanness, passion, and evil desire."⁵³ They considered the gracious gift from above, namely Emmanuel himself, to be like splendid clothes, for "Clothe yourselves," it says, "with our Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its lusts."⁵⁴

So Moses commanded the people of that time to do these things. And we ourselves have also heard the law declaring in a figurative manner what is pleasing to Christ⁵⁵—both the cleansing through water and the putting to death of fleshly desires. For the law decreed that those who were defiled should be sprinkled with water for the purification of the flesh, and that a person suffering from a sexually transmitted disease should be sent out of the camp as one who is unclean, so disdaining, I suppose, the lack of restraint and showing the profaneness of fleshly pleasure. So too, we who have been justified in Christ and sanctified through the Spirit have been commanded to hate even the garment defiled by the flesh.⁵⁶ The law, then, makes advance preparations, and declares beforehand the excellence of the gifts to be given through Christ, though this was still by means of earthy figures.

Let us then consider, as it seems appropriate, the manner

52. Gal 5.24.

53. Col 3.5.

54. Rom 13.14; here correcting *porneian* ("sexual immorality") to *pronoian* ("provision").

55. The words "to Christ" have been added from the Harleian Codex.

56. Cf. Jude 23.

of the divine manifestation. *On the third day*, it says, *when morning came, there were thunders and lightnings, and a dark cloud upon Mount Sinai. There was the loud sound of a trumpet.* For the Only-Begotten, as I said, made his visitation and came down from heaven not in the first period of time, at the beginning of this world; nor was it in the second, middle period of time, but it was in the third and final age. And it was in the morning, as it were, and at the beginning of the day, that is to say, when the spiritual gloom that exists within us was driven away, as when the night is driven away and the darkness disappears. For the one who, by means of deceit and oppression, is taken to be the god of this world had spiritually darkened the whole earth, leading it into the error of polytheism and into every kind of impurity. Yet the God and Lord of all, that is, Christ, shone upon us, and showed us the much-longed-for day, concerning which the divine David spoke when he said, "This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."⁵⁷ In one passage the most-wise Paul also wrote, "The night is far gone, and the day is near,"⁵⁸ and again elsewhere, "We are not of the night, nor of darkness, but we are children of light, and children of the day."⁵⁹ Accordingly, it was as though it were in the morning [505] and on the third day when the Only-Begotten descended.

Now there were *lightnings* upon Mount Sinai, and *a dark cloud*. Lightning is a figure of the divine light and of spiritual radiance, meaning that of the Spirit, which through Christ illumines all things and spreads all over the earth. For the prophet, in speaking to Christ, the God and Savior of all, declared, "Your lightning lit up the world."⁶⁰ We are not saying, of course, that mention is being made of the lightning that comes with the rain, but, as I said just now, the intention is to signify the shining forth of spiritual⁶¹ light under the name of "lightning."

The darkness would indicate that the mystery of Christ

57. Ps 118.24 (117.24 LXX).

58. Rom 13.12.

59. 1 Thes 5.5.

60. Ps 77.18 (76.19 LXX).

61. Var. add "and divine."

is truly difficult to behold. The blessed David himself understood this to be so, I believe, when he proclaimed, "He made darkness his hiding place; around him was his tabernacle, dark water in the clouds of the air; the clouds passed over the brightness that was before him."⁶² Thus the mystery of Christ is hidden, so that instruction from above is needed, and a revelation from God. Peter, for sure, understood this especially well, perceiving the Word to be God come in the flesh and to be truly the Son. "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah," Christ says, "because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father who is in heaven."⁶³ Paul too affirmed that the mystery had been made known to him through a revelation of God.⁶⁴ It is doubtless the case, then, that the darkness indicates obscure knowledge.

Now the trumpet sounded forth, proclaiming the tuneful sound of the gospel revelations. So God said to the people of the Jews through the prophets, "I set watchmen over you, who said, 'Hear the sound of the trumpet.' But they said, 'We will not hear it.' Therefore, the nations heard, and those that tended their flocks among them. Hear, O earth! Behold, I am bringing disasters upon this people, the fruit of their rebellion; because they have not given heed to my word, and they have rejected my law."⁶⁵ For the trumpet sounded forth among them through the watchmen sent by God, that is, the holy apostles, who were appointed as watchmen over us. But the people said, "We will not hear it." Therefore the nations have heard. So we find the holy disciples expressly saying to the people of the Jews, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first. But since you reject it, and do not judge yourselves worthy of eternal life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles, for so the Lord has commanded us."⁶⁶ The blessed Isaiah too, when speaking about the time of Christ's advent, compares to a trumpet the clear sound given through the proclamation of Christ. He says,

62. Ps 18.11-12 (17.12-13 LXX).

63. Mt 16.17.

64. Cf. Gal 1.12.

65. Jer 6.17-19.

66. Acts 14.46-47.

"And it shall come to pass in that day that they will blow the great trumpet."⁶⁷ The law indeed was also a trumpet, but it was weak-sounding and indistinct,⁶⁸ as was Moses, for it just sounded forth in Judea only, in which God became known.⁶⁹ But the great trumpet, Christ, or the proclamation of him, [508] sounds forth throughout the earth, for he said, "This gospel⁷⁰ will be proclaimed in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations."⁷¹ And the outcome of the matter testifies that the message is true,⁷² for nobody remains among us who has not heard of the glory of our Savior.

And Moses, it says, led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood by Mount Sinai. Note the instruction given by Moses, for he brings them to God. He⁷³ gives instruction with respect to Christ, and makes those instructed by him to stand for a while by the mountain,⁷⁴ though he does not take them up it. Here we understand the mountain to be the extraordinary and exalted knowledge of the mystery pertaining to Christ. For it is exceedingly high and not at all accessible to those under the law, but rather is clearly seen by us who have been sanctified by the Spirit. As the Savior himself said, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given,"⁷⁵ speaking of the Jews. Also, addressing words to God the Father in the form of a prayer on our behalf, he said, "I praise you, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden all these things from the wise and intelligent, and you have revealed them to babes. Yes, Father, for this was pleasing in your sight."⁷⁶ Moses, then, stood them

67. Is 27.13.

68. The two adjectives here are the same as those occurring in Ex 4.10 describing the speech of Moses.

69. Cf. Ps 76.1 (75.2 LXX).

70. Var. add "of the kingdom."

71. Mt 24.14.

72. *atrekês*, "accurate," "sure."

73. Var. "The law."

74. Var. "and presents to him those made ready for faith and who understand the things expressed in types, and he makes them stand for a while under him [or 'it']."

75. Mt 13.11.

76. Mt 11.25-26.

by the mountain, but did not take the people up it. For, as I just said, we obtain the height and perfection of wisdom and knowledge through Christ, and not through Moses. For Moses was indeed a servant and an instructor, but Christ, being the Lord of all, came as the giver of perfect knowledge. For in him "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," as it is written.⁷⁷

When God came down with the appearance of fire, there was smoke, like that issuing forth from a furnace, which spread out extensively from above and which, I imagine, completely enveloped the people. For the Word of God for our sake came down to us from heaven like "the fire of a furnace," as the prophet says.⁷⁸ And it was he who baptized us in the Holy Spirit and with fire, with a spiritual fire that consumes what is base within us, and which melts the filthiness of sin, and which does not permit our minds to remain cold⁷⁹ with respect to inordinate pleasures, but rather by this means we are perfected, being aflame⁸⁰ in spirit. And this very thing Christ performed in us. That is why he said, "I came to cast fire upon the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!"⁸¹

So then, by way of accommodation he appeared to those of old in the form of fire, though it was not without smoke. By this we should understand that it is necessary that those who lapse into a careless state, and who choose to despise his divine glory, should lament and wail. For in smoke one is made to shed tears. How can it be doubted that those who hate God and sin against him will depart into the outer darkness? For "in that place," it says, "there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."⁸² The smoke indicates, then, that those concerning whom we are speaking shed bitter tears at their wantonness. [509]

It then added that the sound of the trumpet increased, becoming much louder. At first just a few people could hear it, but

77. Col 2.3.

78. Mal 3.2.

79. This idiom would seem to have the sense of "be faint or inactive."

80. *zeontes*, "boiling," "being zealous," "fervent"; cf. Rom 12.11.

81. Lk 12.49.

82. Mt 8.12.

after a while many heard, the whole assembly in fact. For the proclamation of the gospel is indeed a loud-sounding trumpet, giving a piercing sound, as stated above. But at first, it says,⁸³ it was heard only in Judea. With the passing of time, however, the divine disciples went throughout every place on earth, preaching everywhere, so that from Jerusalem to Illyricum,⁸⁴ or rather to the ends of the earth, and from sunrise to sunset, the sacred trumpet sounded forth. This, I believe, is what is meant by the sound of the trumpet becoming louder.

After this, God commanded the blessed Moses to warn the people, *“so that they do not at any time come near to God to look, and many of them fall. And let the priests who draw near to the Lord God consecrate themselves, lest the Lord destroy them.”* Take careful note, then, from these matters also, how it is impossible to draw near to God through the tutorship of Moses. For God does not accept those who still wish to be distinguished on the basis of types and shadows, because such things belong to Moses. Rather, he seeks the beauty of the truth within us. And Christ is the truth, through whom we have access and come near to the Father, like going up a mountain, and through whom we have knowledge of him. For if we know the Son, through him and in him we also know the Father. So then, it is through Christ that we have access, not through Moses, that is to say, not through the law.

Now the fact that they were to be sanctified distinctly fore-shows that the priesthood under the law was not yet completely holy, for it was still in need of sanctification, and it was for this very reason that he commanded them to be sanctified. But Christ is a blameless and most holy high priest over us, and the guarantee of a better covenant, as Paul says.⁸⁵ That is why the first covenant came to an end. There was also a change of the priesthood itself, since it did not have one that was without fault and perfectly holy. For it made nobody perfect with regard to the conscience,⁸⁶ but rather it presented instruction

83. See n. 69 above.

84. Cf. Rom 15.19.

85. Cf. Heb 7.22.

86. Cf. Heb 9.9.

about baptisms, sprinkling with water for the cleansing of the flesh. For the priesthood according to the law stopped short of being wholly effective for sanctification. Yet, though this lacked perfect holiness, seeing that in the priesthood later to be consecrated in Christ the types would be transformed into reality, God commanded the people to be sanctified.

When he added, "*lest the Lord destroy them,*" he indicated that, once the priesthood that comes through Christ is shown forth in the world, the punishment for those who revere the priesthood under the law was death. It is through Christ that both the Gentiles and the ancient, noble, and holy race itself are sanctified, but that which has not been sanctified by him is wholly profane and remains in a state of impurity. For this reason he said to the people of the Jews, "Truly, truly, I say to you, if you do not believe that I am he, you will die in your sins."⁸⁷

Since, however, the people of Israel had become unrestrained, that they would eventually be sent away and would not turn to God in any other way [512] except through Christ, is readily shown when God providentially says to the most noble Moses, "*Go down, and come back up with Aaron.*" See how Moses was sent away, and then does not return alone, but he goes up again accompanied by Aaron, who was a type of Christ the great priest. For it is through him, as I said, that the Father may be approached. And although those under the law, the people of Israel, were eventually sent away, in the latter times they will recognize the holy and innocent high priest,⁸⁸ which is Christ, and through him they will come to God the Father. It is as though their ascending into the mountain were a great and glorious mystery of the economy in which Christ has saved us all, through whom and with whom be glory to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

87. Jn 8.24.

88. Cf. Heb 7.26.

*Concerning the ascent of Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu,
and seventy of the elders of the people⁸⁹ into the mountain*

1. So the people of Israel were summoned to God through the law, with Moses then acting as a servant and mediator. As the divine Paul writes, however, "The law made nobody perfect."⁹⁰ Indeed, Christ is to be understood as the perfection⁹¹ of the law and the prophets. For through him there comes a total redemption, since "there is no other name under heaven among men, by which we must be saved,"⁹² and in him there is total perfection through sanctification in the Spirit. Through him we have been summoned to the Father, and with him we shall ascend into the heavenly city. And therefore he expressly said, "In my Father's house there are many dwellings; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also."⁹³ For he entered into heaven as the first representative, a kind of firstfruits, of humanity. And that he will take us up there also one should not doubt, for he who does not know how to lie confirmed this, so giving a greater hope to those worthy to obtain it. For we will one day be citizens of heaven, since Christ has gone back there ahead of us, as I said. And the most-wise Paul gave us assurance of the truth of this matter when he wrote, "For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf."⁹⁴ For he was, and is, and will be God, sharing in the divine nature with his Father, and having the likeness of the one who has begotten him. But he was manifest for our sakes, for he became a man so that we who had been cast out from the presence of the Father because of Adam's transgression, and who had suffered the tyranny of our

89. Var. omit "of the people."

90. Heb 7.19; Cyril puts "nobody" (*ouden*) in the place of the original "nothing" (*ouden*).

91. Var. "the end."

92. Acts 4.12.

93. Jn 14.2-3.

94. Heb 9.24.

sin, might come once again into his presence through Christ⁹⁵ and into our original state, while those things that caused the separation are completely annulled.

So in Christ we have been called to the heavenly city, and we have been made worthy of the attention of God the Father. And through Christ and in him we have been taught to worship God the Father, the Creator of all. And the law declared this also [513] to us beforehand in a figurative manner. For the God of all did indeed come down in the form of fire upon Mount Sinai, and administered to the Israelites those laws through which they should most properly have attained original righteousness. For the law was, as it were, a way of entering into more perfect things, consisting of both rudiments and anticipations of the teachings given through Christ.

It also says, *And he said to Moses, "Come up to God, you, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. They shall worship the Lord from a distance, and Moses shall draw near to God alone, but they shall not draw near, and the people shall not come up with them."*⁹⁶ When the all-wise Moses announced these things, all the people answered with a loud voice, saying, *"All the words that the Lord has spoken, we will do and will obey."*⁹⁷ And what comes next? *And Moses wrote down, it says, all the words of the Lord. Then Moses rose up early in the morning and built an altar on the mountain, and he set up twelve stones for the twelve tribes of Israel. He sent forth young men of the people of Israel, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young calves as a peace offering to the Lord God. Then Moses took half of the blood and poured it into bowls, and poured out half of the blood against the altar. Taking the book of the covenant, he read it in the hearing of the people, and they said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do and will obey." So Moses took the blood and sprinkled it upon the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord made with you in accordance with all these words."*⁹⁸

95. Var. (to end of sentence) "and in him, through whom there has been a total recapitulation [*anakephalaiōsis*] and return to the beginning, while those things that had caused the separation are completely annulled."

96. Ex 24.1-2.

97. Cf. Ex 24.3; var. omit "and will obey."

98. Ex 24.4-8.

Once the sacrifice had been performed and all the people had been sprinkled with the blood of the covenant, *Moses and Aaron, it says, and Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of the people of Israel went up. And they saw the place where the God of Israel stood, and under his feet there was something that looked as if it were made*⁹⁹ *of sapphire stones, which appeared like the firmament of heaven in its clearness. Not one of the chief men of Israel perished, but they appeared in the place of God, and ate and drank.*¹⁰⁰

So beginning with the sense of what lies directly before us, we shall now discuss what is appropriate with regard to each of the matters that have been read, matters which have come to us from Christ.

In the inspired Scripture we see things described as though pictured on a writing tablet. We see the church in the heavenly places above, that is in heaven, and on the earth we see that which bears some resemblance to that which is above, namely what we call a hill or a mountain, since something may be raised up and made high through the virtue of those who dwell there. For the mind of the saints is not low nor cast down, but is rather a mind that surpasses that of earthly and fleshly desires, rising up to what is on high. So what was said through David is true, that “the mighty gods¹⁰¹ of the earth have been greatly exalted.”¹⁰²

So, with regard to those who have chosen to live in such a way, and who have ascended to a higher level of virtue, it is quite fitting that they should abide in the heavenly dwellings. The psalmist gives them assurance of this when he says, “Who shall ascend [516] the mountain of the Lord, or who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not given his soul to vanity, and who has not sworn deceitfully to his neighbor. He has not lent his money at interest, nor has he received bribes against the innocent. He will receive a blessing from the Lord, and mercy from God his

99. Var. “were in the form.”

100. Ex 24.9–11.

101. Var. “the mighty ones of God,” according to the standard LXX reading.

102. Ps 47.9 (46.10 LXX).

Savior. This is the generation of those who seek the face of the God of Jacob."¹⁰³

2. So then, the mountain that the saints may ascend is heaven, which is to say the church of the firstborn, but the profane and the unholy may not tread there.

Now the God of all instructed Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel to go up the mountain. He said, "*They shall worship the Lord from a distance, and Moses alone shall draw near to God, but they shall not draw near, and the people shall not come up with them.*"¹⁰⁴

The sons who were descended from Aaron signify to us the sacred race, and the elders those who are elected by reason of birth. Further, Aaron depicts to us Christ himself, the holy and innocent high priest, through whom we have obtained the birth through the Spirit and water and are called "a chosen"¹⁰⁵ race, a royal priesthood, and a holy nation."¹⁰⁶ Therefore, we, the chosen and holy ones, shall eventually ascend to the city above, with Christ the great priest accompanying us and leading us, he who became one of us on our account, and who also worships with us the one who is by nature God, even the Father.¹⁰⁷

Moses draws near, while the Son is with us who are far off. Inasmuch as he relates to the mystery of the economy of the Incarnation, Moses is closer to God, as a mediator of the law and one who defines it. Seeing that the Son came to be with us, even though he is by nature the God and Lord of all, he thus does not deem it unworthy to be counted as one of us. But he is content to be considered, by way of the divine economy, as being lower than Moses. He therefore became one of us, under the law itself, even though as God he was the one who gave the law. That he was under the law is readily seen from the fact that he was circumcised on the eighth day. Also he paid the

103. Ps 24.3-5 (23.3-5 LXX); 15.5 (14.5 LXX).

104. Var. omit "with them."

105. Var. "zealous."

106. 1 Pt 2.9.

107. Var. "who, even though he has divine nature, worships the Father with us."

didrachma tax, even though, being the Son according to his nature, he was exempt. And that sacred Scripture will suffice which says that Emmanuel was “born under the law.”¹⁰⁸

Now, that it was on account of his humanity, and because he became human like us, under the law, that Christ was considered as having been put in second place to Moses, you can also understand by other means. For the God of all commanded the most-noble Moses to free Israel from its unbearable bondage, and to say to Pharaoh, “The Lord God of the Hebrews has summoned us.”¹⁰⁹ Yet he declares the law to be impotent with regard to redemption. He therefore combines the one who is hesitant¹¹⁰ with the divine Aaron, the one that was a type of Christ, who is able to do all things and through whom there is complete redemption. For God said the following to Moses: “Behold, I have made you as a god to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother will be your prophet. You will speak to him all that I command you, and Aaron your brother will speak to Pharaoh.”¹¹¹ Note that Aaron, as he carries out the part of Moses the lawgiver, also acts as mediator. That is why the blessed Paul also ascribes the law to him, [517] even though it was dissolved¹¹² by God. For this is what is written: “Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.”¹¹³

So then, it is only we who are holy and elect that ascend into the heavenly mount, while the other multitude remains below. For “*the people*,” it says, “*shall not come up with them*,” because, as the Savior says, “Many are called, but few are chosen.”¹¹⁴ So we go up, but only with Christ. For Aaron was then with those who were worshiping, and he was among the number of those who were still at a distance. In the same way Christ was also at a dis-

108. Gal 4.4.

109. Ex 3.18; 5.3.

110. Or “who shrinks back,” referring to Moses (cf. Ex 4.10, 13).

111. Ex 7.1–2.

112. Var. “spoken.”

113. Heb 10.28. The logic of the citation appears to lie in the fact that both Moses and Aaron, each encapsulating the law, together comprise two witnesses.

114. Mt 22.14.

tance with us for our sakes, in order that we might come near to the Father with him and through him. For it is clear that everything was carried out on our account and for our sakes. He was with us among the dead, so that we too might enter life with him and through him, for when he had trampled down the power of death, he came back to life again. So he was with us at a distance, even though he is near, in order that we also with him and through him might draw near to the Father. And it was fulfilled. For having become partakers in him through the Spirit, we have been united with God the Father through him, since we are indeed "partakers of the divine nature," in accordance with the Scriptures.¹¹⁵

Nevertheless, the God of all commanded Moses and Aaron, those who were holy and elect, to ascend the high mountain. So it was necessary that those who were later to come into glory, those who were presented as the first actually to go up that they might draw near to God, should be purified by the blood of Christ, who gave his life in exchange for the life of all, and who offered up the flesh that he had assumed as a pleasing aroma. For he gave himself on our behalf as an offering that was holy and undefiled to God, a spiritual burnt offering. This the divine Moses also showed us in a figure, through the illumination given by the Spirit, and leads the way to the knowledge of things to come.

Now we are to understand, it seems to me, that before Moses and those who were chosen went up, *he wrote down all the words of the Lord*. Why this was done beforehand we shall directly state. It was necessary, I believe, for those permitted to undertake the journey up on high to have the law of God inscribed in their mind and upon their heart, so that they might forthwith proclaim to him in song, "I have hidden your sayings in my heart, that I might not sin against you."¹¹⁶ For just as it is profitable for life and a matter of salvation to remember always the words of God, in the same way, I believe, it is the cause of ruin to want to forget them. So then, the blessed Moses wrote all the words of the Lord, concerning which he himself declared to those who

¹¹⁵. 2 Pt 1.4.

¹¹⁶. Ps 119.11 (118.11 LXX).

were being instructed by him, or rather to us ourselves, "And you shall speak of them as you sit in your home, and as you walk along the road, when you go to bed and when you get up."¹¹⁷

Having risen early in the morning, Moses built an altar and set twelve stones around it for the twelve tribes of Israel. Then *he sent forth young men of the people of Israel*,¹¹⁸ and these, it says, *offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young calves as a peace offering to God*. The altar was a particularly distinct figure of the church of Christ, which was, in a way, present¹¹⁹ there upon the mountain. [520] For we say that this other assembly is, as it were, in a high mountain, and is the home city¹²⁰ of the firstborn, whose designer and builder is God.¹²¹

The altar, then, is represented to us as being like the church; around it Moses, in his careful arranging, also set up the twelve stones for the twelve tribes of Israel. In this he was, in effect, giving a guarantee ahead of time to those of the race of Israel that the church of Christ would be a most fitting place for them, and that perhaps Israel should cry out in prayer, "I will go about your altar, O Lord, for me to hear the sound of praise."¹²² That the Father sent the Son as a Savior and Redeemer especially to Israel before all others, Christ himself explains when he says, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."¹²³ But since they raged against him, falling into the most extraordinary madness, Christ necessarily removed himself to the Gentiles. So when he placed the twelve stones around the altar for the twelve tribes of Israel, Moses signified, as I just said, that the altar of Christ was a most fitting place for Israel to be.

From what transpired here, one may learn that those admired for their manliness, of a sort that is spiritual and godly,

117. Dt 6.7.

118. Var. omit all the foregoing words in this sentence.

119. Var. add "still."

120. *métropolis*; var. "the mother of the firstborn, the beautiful city above."

121. Cf. Heb 11.10.

122. Ps 26.7 (25.7 LXX). The Hebrew reads "to make heard the sound of praise," in which the verb "hear" appears in a causative form. The LXX rendering, however, makes "hear" a simple active verb. In this citation Cyril, or the text he was following, has added "for me" to this verb.

123. Mt 15.24.

being those having a firm and vigorous mind, would one day come to perform the sacred ministry of the mystery of Christ. For the *young men* were in fact sent forth, and they presented the burnt offerings. We find that the holy apostles performed this same thing. These, one might say, roamed over all the earth, ministering to Christ and presenting burnt offerings, that is, those people distinguished by a pure faith, and who were especially well fitted to pursue virtue diligently. For the ability to give instruction in the mysteries does not belong to a feeble understanding, nor to a mind that is afflicted with weakness or that is wont to fall into worldly desires. But it belongs to the one who is equipped and who has youthful vigor, and who can also say, "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain."¹²⁴ For youthfulness and a strength that is greater than all things pertain to such a one as this. It is fitting, then, that this person should consecrate burnt offerings and spiritual sacrifices to God, and should engage in the spiritual ministry and perform the sacrifice of salvation, which is very suitably prefigured through the offering up of the calves.

Now at times, on account of the calf's great strength, and because it is the most preeminent of the clean animals, Christ is likened to a mature calf. But at other times he is likened to a small calf, in that, as you can also see, the Only-Begotten became man, and was under a yoke of bondage, since it is true that he came in the form of a servant. As much as one might say, however, with regard to the mystery of his coming in the flesh, he was with us under a yoke of servitude, yet he had no experience¹²⁵ of being yoked, because he was of a nature that was heavenly and free. This is why he is likened to a small calf, because he is both under the yoke and without a yoke. For the small calf is one that is untried by the yoke, although this kind of animal is born for the yoke. Besides this, while he was born under the law, as though under a yoke, he was at the same time free, for he was above the law, being the Lawgiver and God. And thirdly, it would [521] seem, he took away human flesh from the earth, that flesh which was diseased within itself on

124. Phil 1.21.

125. *apeiratos*, "untried," "untested," and also "untempted."

account of the law of sin, in accordance with what Paul says.¹²⁶ As much as it concerns the nature of flesh, he appears to have been put under the yoke of sin, but he had no experience¹²⁷ of it. For “he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”¹²⁸ Christ, then, is most reasonably called a young calf in this way also because he has become a new creature, for he himself is the firstfruits of those who have been called to attain this.

That it was necessary for those who were seeking to draw near to God to be sanctified by blood, Moses demonstrated when he sprinkled blood on all the people and on the book. From this we also learn that Moses himself was imperfect in sanctification, for you can see how he himself, as an individual, was also sanctified by the sprinkling of blood. For the law does not at all cleanse from sin, but it is the grace of the mysteries revealed through Christ that accomplishes this.

So Moses, the instructor in sacred matters, rose very early in the morning to set up the object of the divine mystery and, as I¹²⁹ have already said above, to place around it twelve stones and also to sacrifice young calves. For just as when it is very early in the morning, when, as it were, the Morning Star is shining, and the spiritual day rises upon us, when night is past, and the demonic darkness has ceased, so the radiant beauty of the church with its noble sacrifice is shown forth, upon which the mystery of Christ is enacted, with the tribes of the earth standing around it, represented figuratively by the stones. And so the divine Peter,¹³⁰ reshaping the picture given by this figure into reality, writes to those sanctified in Christ, “in whom you also, like living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood.”¹³¹

The young men offered up the burnt sacrifices and were

126. Cf. Rom 7.5, 23–25; 8.3.

127. See n. 125 above.

128. Rom 8.3–4.

129. Var. “we.”

130. Cyril actually made the error of writing “Paul” at this point.

131. 1 Pt 2.5.

spiritual officiators of sacred rites. Then, and only then, did we come into the presence of the Father. And we, being considered as the assembly of those standing there, offered to him the vigor of our mind, which is ready for every manner of good work. This same thing the divine David himself expressly pre-announced to us when, assuming the role of believers, he said to the God of all, "In the morning you shall hear my voice; in the morning I will wait upon you, and I will look up, for you are not a God who desires iniquity, nor shall the one who does evil dwell with you."¹³²

So having been sanctified, which was then expressed in a figure through the consecration by the blood,¹³³ *Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up into the mountain. And they saw under his feet there was something that looked as if it were made of sapphire stones, which appeared like the firmament of heaven in its clearness. Not one of the chief men of Israel perished, but they appeared in the place of God, and ate and drank.*¹³⁴

Note how they saw what was called *the place of God*, like the firmament of heaven in appearance. For heaven is bright, and that which is high and ethereal is like sapphire. So it is particularly appropriate that heaven should be the place where [524] one comes to rest, abiding among angels. For one who is holy dwells among the holy and is made to recline with those who inhabit the heavenly city, on account of being well suited and especially well prepared for the excellence of that life. For we believe the multitude of heavenly spirits to be holy.

It says that what was under his feet appeared to those who went up the mountain to be *like the appearance of the firmament of heaven in its clearness*. For it was necessary that those who had been afflicted with the error of polytheism, and who had worshiped the creature, having then been called to the knowledge of God, should necessarily see, much to their benefit, that he has heaven itself under his feet, and that he is the Master of all, the one who brings everything into existence, and who redeems them from the ancient error.

¹³². Ps 5:3-4 (5.4-5 LXX).

¹³³. Var. add "of the sacrifice."

¹³⁴. Var. add "there."

That a further parallel exists with regard to those who would eventually enter into the heavenly city, and who would partake richly of the divine gifts and delight in those good and spiritual things that come from Christ,¹³⁵ is shown¹³⁶ by the fact that, having come to be in the place of God, those who went up the mountain ate and drank.

Among those things I said a moment ago was the fact that Moses alone was instructed to draw near to God, while the others were to worship at a distance, among whom was Aaron also. So we said that he who is the Son, being near to God the Father, came to be with us in our nature at a distance, as our innocent and undefiled high priest, so that through him and also with him, we too might find ourselves near. For this reason he was also called Emmanuel, which means "God with us."

Yet, although the Son later came to be with us as a man, one can see that not even the blessed Moses himself had access to the Father without Christ acting as mediator. For it is he who is the way, he who is the door, as we said before. And we also learn this from the following words, for it says, *The Lord said to Moses, "Come up to me in the mountain, and stand there, and I will give you the stone tablets, the law, and the tablets¹³⁷ that I have written to give them laws."* Then Moses rose up with Joshua his attendant, and they went up into the mountain of God.¹³⁸ Note that Moses, the one who received the law in shadows and pictures,¹³⁹ was in fact called, yet Joshua, who had not been summoned, comes along with him as a type of Christ, who is not called by the Father in the same way as others, for he is always with him. So having forged a way for those who are called, he acts as a mediator and as one who associates with them. For it is impossible, as I said, that we should come to be with God the Father in any other way except through Christ's mediatorship alone. To him, then,

135. Var. "from God."

136. Var. add "clearly."

137. Here Cyril departs from the LXX, which reads "the stone tablets, the law and the commandments," as followed by the Harleian copy of the *Glaphyra*.

138. Ex 24.12-13.

139. Or "and in letters" (*grammasin*).

be glory and might, together with the all-holy Father, and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

Concerning the calf made by Israel

Those who do not have any law to assist them are carried away, and very easily so, into all kinds of deeds by the blind and uncontrolled manner of their impetuous desires, and they incur much guilt before God and men, even though it may very much seem as though they are afflicted by a disease and are without blame. But this is not so. For if there is something most untoward, this they admire and praise as being of value, and they do not know how to distinguish what is truly worthy of acceptance from what, contrariwise, is shameful and questionable.¹⁴⁰ It is just like the merchant ships sailing to and fro upon the great and wide sea. If they have a skilled master mariner standing at the rudder, then they progress along a straight course. But if there is someone [525] who is not greatly skilled, they are cast about all over the sea, turning as they are pushed by the waves, which can drive them to any place whatsoever. So it is with the soul of a man that has no law standing over it. It is readily inclined to everything it pleases and is ravaged by the waves of its own pleasures.

We discover that Israel suffered from this very thing. For not yet having the mind that progresses in godliness, nor the heart that leans upon God, they were caught, as it were, going backwards, and were content to be charged with accursed and abominable idolatry. The Savior himself therefore said concerning them, "When the unclean spirit goes out from a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and does not find it. 'I will return,' it says, 'to my own place.' And when it comes, it finds it unoccupied, swept, and put in order. Then it goes and¹⁴¹ brings seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there; and the final state of that man is worse than the first." Then he adds, "Truly, I say to you, so

140. Var. "unacceptable."

141. Var. omit "goes and."

it shall be with this evil generation.”¹⁴² For the evil spirit was driven out in the beginning when they sacrificed the lamb as a type of Christ, and were anointed by its blood, and escaped the Destroyer. But lo and behold, the spirit burst in again, in a way that was much worse than before, for [Scripture] speaks truly regarding those who choose to undergo such things when it says, “It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn back from the holy commandment given to them. It has happened to them according to the true proverb: ‘A dog returns to its own vomit,’ and ‘A sow that is washed goes back to wallowing in the mud.’”¹⁴³

Anyone, then, who takes the trouble to do so may observe that the Israelites went back to their own vomit, and once again gave themselves to wallowing in the mud. For it is written, *When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people joined together against Aaron, and said to him, “Arise and make for us gods who will go before us. As for this man Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has happened to him.” Aaron said to them, “Take off the gold earrings that are in the ears of your wives and daughters, and bring them to me.” So all the people took off the gold earrings in the ears of their wives, and brought them to Aaron. He received the gold from their hands, and fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made it into a golden calf. Then they¹⁴⁴ said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.” When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it, and made a proclamation, saying, “Tomorrow there will be a festival to the Lord.” Then he rose early the next day, and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.*¹⁴⁵

Now the divine Moses, when he was being thoroughly instructed in the law, spent some time [528] on Mount Sinai. But the people foolishly gave little consideration to the reasons for

142. Mt 12.43–45.

143. 2 Pt 2.21–22. Cf. Prv 26.11.

144. Some manuscripts of the LXX say “he,” a reading which Cyril himself adopts below (528).

145. Ex 32.1–6.

his delay, and so sank into a state of madness. As a result they completely failed to recognize that everything had been made by the all-powerful God, even though they had seen him with the appearance of fire upon Mount Sinai, and had heard his voice for themselves, and had entreated Moses to act as their mediator. One might say¹⁴⁶ of them, “O how they had reached the full measure of folly!” And so Moses was delayed.

What, then, was this to the God who is always present with those upon the earth, even though he may perhaps not be seen? The divine David cried out, “A perverse and rebellious generation.”¹⁴⁷ Moses also said with regard to this, “You forgot the God who feeds you.”¹⁴⁸ What kind of gods did he need who had so wonderfully redeemed the people, he who made the hail and the three days of darkness fall upon the land of the Egyptians, by whom all the firstborn perished in a single night, and for whom the wild and untamable sea allowed the people to escape the cruelty of their pursuers? If one should wish the details of every event, it would take a long time to speak of them all.

So then, while the all-wise Moses was delayed, the people set themselves against Aaron. And when he saw how irresistible their onslaught was (for they cried out, “*Make for us gods who will go before us*”), he instructed them to bring the earrings of their wives and daughters, and they brought them straight away. That they had fallen into the error they had committed in Egypt and slipped back into their former senselessness, Aaron demonstrated through the object he made, as he fashioned for them an image to worship in the form of a calf. For in Egypt the calf was an object of veneration both for the Egyptians themselves and for those infected with their deceit.

Note, then, how they returned to their former condition. The unclean spirit came into them again, and what the Savior said happened to them—their final state was worse than the first.

I believe that the divine Aaron asked for the earrings in a

146. Var. “you might hear someone say.”

147. Ps 78.8 (77.8 LXX).

148. Dt 32.18.

providentially accommodated manner,¹⁴⁹ by which it was signifying that they had, in effect, stripped their ability to hear of its proper adornment, no longer being disposed to obey, but rather being carried away into a godless¹⁵⁰ and profane disobedience. For God had said, “You shall have no other gods beside me.”¹⁵¹ But the people, having approved these words and accorded them the proper honor, and having said, “All that God has spoken we will do and will obey,” then sought out carved gods. Do you see how they refused to give heed? And this, I believe, is what is meant by the adornment of the ears.

See how Aaron thought little of the undertaking. For when he showed them the image made in the form of a calf, he proclaimed, “*These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.*” Yet they had not been redeemed by a calf (for how could that be?), but by a mighty hand, and with a great arm, and with signs and wonders. So, recalling those things done by God, it was surely in a feigned manner that Aaron said, “*These are your gods, O Israel.*” He also offered sacrifices, and they ate and drank [529] as though at a feast, and they rose up to play. For turning away from God leads¹⁵² to bondage to the things of the flesh, to consider impure behavior as a delight, and for pleasure to be reckoned as good and enjoyable, matters which it would have been better for them to have mourned.

Therefore, the blessed¹⁵³ Paul also counted impure idolatry among carnal failings, saying, “For the works of the flesh are evident, which are sexual immorality, impurity, lewdness, idolatry.”¹⁵⁴ For this error leads to worse things, even to be carried away from God, and it compels one to suffer the most shameful of all evils. For they danced, engaging, I suppose, in feasting songs, doing and saying things of which drunkards might be accused.

So God made these impetuous actions known to the divine

149. *oikonomikôs*.

150. *theomisês*, which may have the sense of either “God-hating” or “hated by God.”

151. Ex 20.3.

152. Var. add “wholly.”

153. Var. “divine.”

154. Gal 5.19.

Moses, who was unaware of them, saying, *"Go down from here at once, for the people you brought out from the land of Egypt have transgressed. They have quickly turned aside from the way which you commanded them. They have made a calf for themselves, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it,"*¹⁵⁵ and said, *"These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt."* Now let me alone, and I will vent my anger against them and consume them; and I will make you into a great nation." Then Moses prayed before the Lord his God.¹⁵⁶

Note how Israel is so easily carried away and so readily turns to apostasy. God does not consider them worthy of calling his own people, but even though it was he himself who had pronounced the law, he here attributes it to Moses, for he says, *"They have quickly turned aside from the way which you commanded them."*¹⁵⁷ So Christ also, speaking to those who were of a similar mind as these, who were shaped by the thought of impiety, with no concern to act well in accordance with the truth, said that at the divine judgment seat the Judge would declare, "Depart from me, you workers of iniquity, I do not know you."¹⁵⁸ Surely it is those who have an unceasing love for God that are known to him and are truly his people, who maintain a genuine faith, who are resolved to do good, and who keep themselves far from any accusation of promiscuous behavior.

Yet Moses persisted in his entreaty, determined to restrain the wrath against all the people. For it was necessary for the one acting as mediator to be like Christ, who warded off the wrath of heaven that was¹⁵⁹ upon us due to our many sins, and who, being the Son, offered justification by faith to those who had sinned. Moses was, then, on this occasion also, a figure of the mediatorship of Christ. So by his supplications the divine Moses held back the severity of God's wrath; then he

155. Var. omit "and sacrificed to it."

156. Ex 32.7-8, 10-11.

157. It should be noted that the second person ("you") is only a feature of the LXX and not of the Masoretic Hebrew text, which has a first person verb ("I commanded them"). If, however, the vowel points of the Hebrew are excluded, as they were a later addition to the consonantal text, the form is ambiguous and could be taken as either first or second person.

158. Cf. Mt 25.12; Lk 13.27.

159. Var. add "coming."

came down from the mountain. When he learned of those who were dancing, and when the sound of those who were drunk reached his ears, he broke the tablets in pieces upon which the laws were inscribed. He no longer deemed the people worthy of an instructor as they were disobedient and reckless, and extremely easily led with regard to things that were not even proper for them to think about, and thus they committed apostasy¹⁶⁰ so soon.

When Moses came to the congregation, he smashed the calf. Then he put it into the water, and, it says, he made the people of Israel drink it. By this means he was, in effect, [532] signifying that their impious act would even reach the organs and bowels within them. I think too that he was perhaps in a way also indicating to them that they had a heart that was full of profane and abominable idolatry. Then, having called those who were chosen, he ordered them to kill first and foremost those who were guiltier than the others, not sparing brothers, neighbors, or friends. And there fell twenty-three thousand people.¹⁶¹

After he had exacted the due punishment upon those who had committed such an act of unrestrained impiety, Moses turned back to God and offered entreaties on behalf of the others. Not without some effort on Moses's part did God consent to his request, saying that he would not accompany them himself, but that he would rather send an angel with them as a leader to guide them on the journey. At this the people mourned, and God commanded them to remove their robes and all their adornments, and that they should travel in such a state of dejection. And Moses, having been brought to the limit of his endurance, *took his tent*, it says, *and pitched it outside the camp*.¹⁶² And so the passage has briefly been dealt with at the literal level.

Now we find that the people of Israel undertook to do the

160. Var. "acted impiously."

161. Cf. Ex 32.20, 25–28. Both the Hebrew and LXX agree that the number is, in fact, only "three thousand."

162. Ex 33.7.

very same things¹⁶³ when the Only-Begotten became human like us. For he called them into the kingdom of heaven, just as they were called through Moses long ago to go into the land of promise, and he promised to set free those who believed in him. He had in fact then freed from the oppression of Egypt those of the race of Israel who received by faith salvation through blood, for they had slaughtered the lamb by way of a figure, while Christ was yet to fulfill the mystery.

Those, however, who had the law that instructed them well in regard to Christ through shadows and types, who held wholly to the words of Moses¹⁶⁴ while having no thought for Moses himself (for they had regard for the teaching and commandments of men), threw off the yoke of service under God. For they did not in any way accept the one through whom he exercises power over all things, which is Christ. And what was the cause of this? It was because they had turned aside to worldly deceit and deemed pleasures in this life to be a more important pursuit, and so inevitably they stumbled. For they were invited to the wedding and did not wish to go, preferring the acquisition of wives and of fields.¹⁶⁵ And so, since they had sunk into such impiety, it was then the time that Israel should endure great wrath. But the entreaties of the saints saved the remnant, though punishment came upon many. For they fell, consumed by the sword and bitter warfare, and they were scarcely aware that the charge against them was the evil they had committed in raging against Christ.

So, having cast off, as it were, their garments of former glory and all spiritual adornment, Israel became much afflicted with unpleasantness and were destitute of all glory. And that Christ himself also departed from them, Moses indicated when he removed his own tent far from the camp. For we see how, in forsaking the masses of the Jews, that is, their encampment,¹⁶⁶ and having in a way removed himself from the multitude of those people to distant lands, Christ indicated the immovable tent of

163. Var. add "and wronged one who was a kinsman."

164. Var. add "the all-wise."

165. Cf. Lk 14.16-24.

166. Var. omit "that is, their encampment."

the Gentiles. This is the church [533], which he himself proclaims as his own, when he says through the psalmist, "Here I will dwell, for I have chosen it."¹⁶⁷

It was necessary, then, that those who did not have Emmanuel, the Lord of glory,¹⁶⁸ should be seen to have been stripped of ornamentation and glory, while those who love him he invests with the adornment of faith and virtue. With regard to this they are greatly pleased to say, "Let my soul rejoice in the Lord. For he has clothed me with the garment of salvation, and the robe of gladness; he has put a garland upon me as on a bridegroom, and adorned me with ornaments like a bride."¹⁶⁹ This is a beauty that is quite outstanding, and by it we mean spiritual beauty in Christ, through whom and with whom be glory to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, now and always, for ever and ever. Amen.

Concerning the veil over the face of Moses

"Do you understand what you are reading?"¹⁷⁰ It is quite appropriate that these words should be uttered in connection with the people of the Jews, whose understanding in this matter has come to such madness that they are called senseless by the sacred oracles. For "Behold," it says, "a foolish and senseless people, who have eyes and do not see, who have ears and do not hear."¹⁷¹ That the law given to them through Moses was utterly unprofitable due to their great lack of understanding, Christ himself proved to us when he said, "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal¹⁷² life; and it is they that testify of me. Yet you do not wish to come to me that you may have life."¹⁷³ For "a hardening has come upon part of Israel,"¹⁷⁴ and they lacked enlightenment through the Spirit.

167. Ps 132.14 (131.14 LXX).

168. Var. omit "the Lord of glory."

169. Is 61.10.

170. Acts 8.30.

171. Jer 5.21.

172. Var. omit "eternal."

173. Jn 5.39-40.

174. Rom 11.25.

They were dull with regard to the faith, it being altogether impossible for them to be brought to wish for and give thought for those things needful for salvation.

Yet Israel was not above punishment, because, after choosing what was profitable for them, they turned to an uncontrollable disobedience, and though they had the light from heaven above, they loved rather to walk in the dark and in the night. It was this that the prophet meant when he said concerning them, "While they were waiting for light, darkness came upon them; while they were waiting for brightness, they walked in gloom."¹⁷⁵ They continued to be wild and unrestrained, deeming those things that were profitable to be of very little account in any way, things by means of which they would probably have easily avoided committing unrighteous acts. For Christ declared, "I am the light of the world," and, "While you have the light, walk in the light, so that darkness will not overtake you."¹⁷⁶ So they were just the same as those who have no sense or understanding. Consequently, they were overtaken by the darkness and continued living as in the night, being completely without any share in divine illumination and lacking divine light, for they utterly failed to understand the inspired Scripture.

And the reason for the foregoing the divine Paul explains to us when he says, "For until this very day the same veil remains over the reading of the old covenant. It has not been removed, because in Christ it is done away with. Even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies upon their hearts. But when [536] anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."¹⁷⁷

Note, then, the mystery that shines forth in the older sacred writings. It reads as follows: *The Lord said to Moses, "Write down these words, for on the basis of these words I will establish¹⁷⁸ a covenant with you and with Israel."* So Moses was there before the Lord for forty days and forty nights. He ate no bread, nor did he drink any water.

¹⁷⁵. Is 59.9.

¹⁷⁶. Jn 12.35.

¹⁷⁷. 2 Cor 3.13-17.

¹⁷⁸. The LXX here in fact reads, "I have established" (*tetheimai*).

*And he wrote upon the tablets these words of the covenant, the ten commandments. When Moses came down from the mountain (and the two tablets were in his hands as he was coming down from the mountain), Moses did not know that the appearance of the skin of his face had been glorified when God was speaking to him. Then Aaron and all the elders of Israel saw Moses, and the appearance of the skin of his face had been made glorious, and they were afraid to go near him. But Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation came back to him, and Moses spoke with them. Afterwards all the people of Israel approached him, and he gave them all the commandments that the Lord had spoken to him in the mountain. When Moses had finished speaking to him, he put a veil over his face. But whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak to him, he would remove the veil until he came out. And when he came out he told all the people of Israel what the Lord had commanded him. And the people of Israel saw that the face of Moses had been glorified, so Moses put the veil over his face until he went in to speak with him.*¹⁷⁹

Now the God of all inscribed the law on tablets made of stone. But when the face of Moses was made radiant by contact with the divine light while he was in the presence of God during the forty days with no thought for human concerns, those who were chosen out of Israel failed to comprehend what they saw, Aaron above all others. Yet when they withdrew from him and turned to flee, Moses called them back. So he would speak to the people of Israel, having first put the veil in place over his face, making the beam of the divine light which shone forth upon the shadows much more bearable for the multitudes of people. *But when he went in to God, it says, he removed the veil.*

You see, therefore, how the light of the law is not able to be comprehended by the thinking of the Jews. But if what is written in it is interpreted spiritually, nothing other than the mystery of Christ will shine forth, and the divine and most lucid light will enter into the hearts of those who hear. The people of Israel, however, did not hear the sacred oracles in this way, nor did they understand the depth of the mystery. And so Nicodemus, when he heard Christ talking about the rebirth through the Spirit, feebly and nonsensically declared, "How can a man

¹⁷⁹. Ex 34:27-35.

be born again [537] when he is old? Can he enter into his mother's womb a second time and be born?"¹⁸⁰ Then, as Christ was persuading him of the need to value faith more than understanding and reason, Nicodemus added to this, "How can these things be?"¹⁸¹ even though the law had depicted the mystery¹⁸² beforehand through innumerable figures. So then, the very light of the law was not accepted by the Jews, and not only by the common masses and the weak, but also by those appointed to special and sacred office.

You have learned that Aaron and the elders with him were afraid of Moses's glory. It was therefore absolutely necessary that Moses put on the veil. For the law contains a shadow, the earthiness of the letter, and the not very great brightness of the literal sense. When, however, he entered into the presence of God, it says that Moses removed the veil. This same thing we find also to be true with respect to our own selves. For when we have been brought, as it were, into the presence of God the Father, being led there by Christ, we will see the glory of Moses without any obscuring shadows, as we will understand the law spiritually, for "we are being transformed from one degree of glory to another," as it is written.¹⁸³

Now it cannot be doubted that the mystery of Christ is glorious, since the blessed Paul proclaimed concerning the first and the second covenant, "For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, how much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory?"¹⁸⁴ For the shadow of the law has passed away, even though it had been honored by the glory that came through Moses, namely, that seen in the face of Moses. Yet those unshakeable things established by Christ remain, and he has an abundance of glory and grace which is altogether greater than the former glory.

So then, having had the shadows present in the law removed, we behold the glory of God, in accordance with what is writ-

180. Jn 3.4.

181. Jn 3.9.

182. Var. add "of Christ."

183. 2 Cor 3.18.

184. 2 Cor 3.9.

ten.¹⁸⁵ If we should attend to the lamb slain by way of a figure, we shall immediately know the mystery, discovering the true Lamb, who because of us and for our sake delivered himself up as a pleasing aroma to God the Father. Even if the ashes of a heifer sprinkled upon those who were defiled should sanctify with regard to the cleansing of the flesh,¹⁸⁶ we shall understand that the purification made through Christ is nothing less than that which comes through water and Spirit, not ridding us of fleshly dirt, but cleansing us from the blemish of pollutions within the spirit and soul. For we have been sanctified in Christ.

It will also be helpful for us to add this. Up to this chapter in Exodus it has been our design to separate out the narratives, not because we are reluctant to interpret the adjoining passages, but because we have composed books entitled "Concerning Worship in Spirit and Truth." In these books, so as to leave out nothing of importance from our discussion, we undertook suitable investigations into the construction of the holy tabernacle and everything found in it, namely, the holy place,¹⁸⁷ the ark, the table, and the lampstand. We devoted the ninth and tenth books to this purpose.

To our God be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.¹⁸⁸

185. Cf. 2 Cor 3.19.

186. Cf. Heb 9.13.

187. Var. "mercy seat" (*hilastêrion*, that is, the lid of the ark where propitiation took place).

188. Var. omit "To our God be the glory for ever and ever. Amen."

BOOK ELEVEN: LEVITICUS

That [540] the suffering of Christ was a peace offering¹



THE GOD OF ALL did not in fact make death, nor does he delight in the destruction of living beings, but he created all things to exist and the generations of the world to be perpetuated. Also, there is no kingdom of Hades upon the earth, but, as it is written, “By the envy of the devil death entered the world.”² This statement in itself very suitably contains the truth of the matter. For the Maker did not entrust that which was so wonderful and glorious to those who had come into being for it then to perish so easily. Rather, death entered due to wrath, because our forefather Adam disregarded the divine command and turned aside to disobedience and waywardness.

In Christ, however, the charges were taken up and removed from the midst, through the obedience of one man, for in him we have been justified. The divine Paul testifies to this when he writes, “For as through one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also through one man’s obedience many will be made righteous.”³ In that one man we were condemned to death, but we have been shown mercy through Christ, and we have been given new life. For to the Father he was “obedient even to the point of death,” “he laid down his life on our behalf,” and “by his wounds we were healed,” in accordance with the Scriptures.⁴

1. *sôtêrios*, “saving,” “salvific.” This is the term employed by the translators of the LXX for the levitical “peace offering” (cf. Lv 3.1).

2. Wis 2.24.

3. Rom 5.19.

4. Cf. Phil 2.8; 1 Jn 3.16; Is 53.5; 1 Pt 2.24.

It could be said that although we were afflicted with the disease of sin in Adam with respect to the world, in Christ we have now become a spiritual sacrifice that is fragrant to God the Father, good and acceptable, exceedingly better than the shadow relating to the law. So Christ is our firstfruits, and he has opened up a new way for us. For this [541] is what David says to God the Father in heaven in the book of Psalms: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but you have prepared a body for me; burnt offerings and sin offerings did not please you. Then I said, 'Behold, I come; I desired to do your will, O God.'"⁵

It is possible now to look into these things further from what is written in Leviticus. There we read as follows: "*If you bring an offering of firstfruits to the Lord, it shall be new grains ground and roasted for the Lord; so you shall bring the offering of the firstfruits. And you shall pour oil upon it, and you shall put frankincense on it. It is an offering. Then the priest shall offer up its memorial portion taken from the grains with the oil, and all its frankincense; it is an offering by fire to the Lord.*"⁶

2. The literal meaning is very plain, and it does not, to my mind, require any effort to be able to understand the details. Nevertheless, I will say this, that the flour obtained from legumes⁷ is called "grain." And here the mystery of Christ is present in figures. He himself is the offering made for us, the spiritual firstfruits, that is, the firstfruits of humanity, the first-born from the dead, the first to enter incorruption, the firstfruits, as it were, of those that slept.

Now when a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it grows up as numerous ears of wheat. For this is what Christ himself told us, "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."⁸ Moreover, he did die, not on his own account, but for us.⁹ This

5. Ps 40.6–8 (39.7–9 LXX). The Harleian MS extends the citation further to include: "and your law is within my heart."

6. Lv 2.14–16.

7. Cyril here uses the term *osprion*. This strictly denotes pulse of any kind, though it may refer to vegetables in general. The comments that follow, however, better relate to cereal crops.

8. Jn 12.24.

9. Var. add "and this is, in effect, a beautiful and fragrant offering without blemish which is presented to God the Father as though it were from us."

is subtly shown forth to us by the letter of the law. For it says that if one wished to present an offering of firstfruits to the Lord, it should be new grains ground and roasted for God.

Note, then, how Moses, or the letter of the law,¹⁰ enjoins us to offer fruit out of that which is new. For Christ is the firstfruits, as I said, of a nature which is restored to newness of life, and in him all things have become new.

Yet it is not simply grains of wheat that are offered, but grains that have been ground from legumes. For in the same way that fine flour is obtained from wheat, so it is not the fresh grain itself that is prescribed for offering by fire, but ground grains are to be used in this case. This is to say that the law enjoined the use of ground grain from legumes so that there might appear to be something edible present in the offering. For it is not our custom to consider fresh grain as food, but that which is crushed.

So then, on the one hand Christ is the firstfruits and a beautiful and fragrant offering to God, and on the other he gives a great deal of nourishment to us. For he is "the bread that came down from heaven and gives life to the world,"¹¹ as if he provided himself as food for us, just like flour or grain.

It said that it was necessary to pour oil upon the offering, and it commanded that frankincense should also be applied to it. The oil symbolizes prosperity and happiness, while the frankincense suitably signifies to us that which is sacred and fragrant. For, as I said, Christ became an offering on our behalf, and was, as it were, the spiritual firstfruits of the fields. [544] That his death was not a matter for tears and mourning, but that tears and mourning were rather taken away and replaced by the most wonderful hope of happiness, how could one possibly doubt? For he was not held down by the gates of Hades, nor did he remain among the dead. Rather, although "death prevailed and devoured," in accordance with what the prophet said, yet "God also wiped away every tear from every face; he removed the reproach of his people from all the earth."¹² How was this

10. Var. "the sacred letter."

11. Jn 6.33.

12. Is 25.8.

so? Because Christ came back to life again, having trodden down death, in order that he might deliver us from corruption. And having so thoroughly dispensed with mourning also, he might now move those rejoicing to declare, "You have turned my mourning into joy for me; you have torn off my sackcloth and girded me with gladness."¹³ The manner of the offering, therefore, could reasonably indicate the hope of happiness, but it might also be interpreted in another way if one wishes. We have been shown mercy in Christ, and this, I believe, is what it means when it says, "You have anointed my head with oil."¹⁴

Now by means of the incense we may understand that the death of Christ was not for any justifiable causes, or for any offense of his, but it was a most wonderful and wholly faultless sacrifice for us (for he was presented as an offering so that he might do away with sin and with the death that came through it and because of it). For our forefather Adam by the transgressions committed in the beginning received the curse that was most properly deserved. So when he first became infected with that truly malodorous disease of sin, he was justly condemned.¹⁵ But the Lord and Savior of all, as he could not be charged with any wrongdoing (for he did not commit any sin), became a beautiful and fragrant offering for us, being the first, as it were, of the new fruit, and of every kind, that is to say, both of wheat and of legumes. For he died for all, great and small, Jew and Gentile, and through him and in him we have become a memorial portion for God the Father. This is why the letter of the law says, "*Then the priest shall offer up its memorial portion taken from the grains with the oil, and all its frankincense; it is an offering by fire to the Lord.*" For in falling on account of our many sins, we also became, in effect, separated from the presence of the Father. But when Christ became an offering for us, he remembered us and blessed us. He blessed those who feared him, both small and great. Therefore, we have been taught to sing, "May you be blessed by the Lord, who made heaven and earth."¹⁶

13. Ps 30.11 (29.12 LXX).

14. Ps 23.5 (22.5 LXX).

15. Var. add "to death."

16. Ps 115.15 (113.23 LXX).

Now the law explains the sacrifice of Christ in another way also, saying, *"If his gift to the Lord is a peace offering, if he offers to him an animal from the herd, whether male or female, he shall bring one that is unblemished before the Lord. And he shall place his hands upon the head of the offering and he shall slay it by the entrance of the tabernacle of witness. Then the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall pour the blood upon the altar of burnt offering on all sides. From the peace offering they shall present as an offering by fire to the Lord the [545] fat covering the stomach and all the fat on the entrails, the two kidneys and the fat that is upon them at the loins; and the lobe of the liver shall be removed with the kidneys. The sons of Aaron, the priests, shall offer them up on the altar, upon the burnt offering, upon the wood which is on the fire, a pleasing aroma to the Lord."*¹⁷

Not only could it be an animal from the herd, but if one chose, he could make an offering from among the sheep, or one that would be reckoned as a peace offering from among the goats. The offering was carried out in the same manner, there being one form of ritual for them all. Whether the sacrificial victim happened to be male or whether it was female, it said it was necessary that it should be completely free from any blemish.

The discussion of this offering leads to Emmanuel himself. For he was the fattened calf, the spotless sacrificial victim who takes away the sin of the world, and who, like a he-goat, was slain for us, for according to the law a he-goat was slain as a sin offering.

But note carefully the manner of the offering. For in speaking of both male and female the letter of the law is not very precise. Yet Christ might be understood with reference to both. As a male, he was one who led, as a guide,¹⁸ for of the two the male is more of a leader. But he was like a female in being under the law and one who was led. For the female is always subject to the authority of the male, taking second place, since she is in fact the lesser and smaller in size.

Now what was sacrificed was without blemish. And such is Christ. Therefore, he said, "The ruler of this world is coming,

17. Lv 3.1-5.

18. *kathégētēs*, "guide," "teacher," "leader."

and he will find nothing in me.”¹⁹ And indeed, in being entirely without fault when he was among the Jews, he demonstrated his divine nature, saying, “Which of you convicts me of sin? If I speak the truth, why do you not believe me?”²⁰ So the sacred victim is without blemish.

The sacrifice was slain before the Lord at the entrance of the tabernacle, having been brought to him by the hand of the offerer. Then, once the blood had been poured out at the base of the altar, it said, the innards had to be offered. For the death of the Son, who laid down his own life for the life of the world, was enacted before the eyes, as it were, of God the Father. If it is true when it says, “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints,”²¹ how could God the Father not count the death of the Son as worthy of being viewed by himself? For he does indeed altogether honor it and deem it worthy of his sight, while he turns away from what is loathsome and hateful.

Therefore, that Christ’s death was not ignominious is directly shown by the fact that the Father chose to look upon it. He was slain at the very doors of the sanctuary. For Emmanuel died, opening up for us, as it were, the entrance to the holy of holies, opening also the doors of the church in heaven for those who believe in him. By the death of Christ, then, we reap the benefit of being able to move into the holy tabernacle itself, which the Lord and not man set up, the heavenly Jerusalem, the beautiful city above, the mother of the saints and the home²² of angels.

Now, that the death of Christ would be holy and sacred [548] is indicated when it says that the blood had to be poured out upon the altar. This shows, in another way, that he laid down his life for the church. For the altar is a figure of the church, and the blood a figure of life. And the offering, or consecration, of the innards, namely, of the fat, the liver, and the kidneys, further indicates that all things in Christ are holy, sacred,

19. Cf. Jn 14.30. Cyril has changed the wording of the last clause, which in the Gospel literally says, “he has nothing in me.”

20. Jn 8.46.

21. Ps 116.15 (115.16 LXX).

22. *trophos*, lit. “nurse,” “nourisher,” “sustainer.”

and fragrant. For in the liver, the learned say, the desires, or the appetites, of every sort arise. The kidney is a part of the body which has dividing as its function, for it separates what is superfluous from what is necessary. This is the function that is carried out within us by the mind. For, since it is wise, the mind forbids that which would give rise to wrongdoing, but gladly permits the performance of that which is beneficial. So the blessed David, as though speaking in the person of Christ, sang in the Psalms, "All my desire is before you,"²³ and, "For you, O Lord, possess my inward parts."²⁴ And the fat shows in a figure that Emmanuel is full of virtue, as befits God. For the fat is, as it were, the best nourished part of living creatures, representing the virtue, I believe, of the same kind as the mind which receives nourishment from heaven.

So then, Christ is holy and without fault, full of virtue, sacred and fragrant, a spiritual burnt offering, which is offered in all kinds of forms, that is to say, in the form of a calf, a ram, and a goat. For he was a peace offering on our behalf, and he gave himself up, one for the sake of all, he who is equal in worth to all things, through whom and with whom be glory to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

*That having become partakers of the mystical blessing,
we shall be completely and utterly holy and consecrated*

The divine disciples became keepers of the mysteries of our Savior, though they did not seize this honor for themselves, nor come to it at their own behest. Rather, they were appointed to apostleship and ordained to minister the saving message, namely the gospel of Christ, to people everywhere under heaven. For he made the teachers of the mysteries to be eminent, saying to them, "Go and make disciples of all nations."²⁵ So, being especially willing and zealous, through the oracles of their Master they brought enlightenment to the world. Having

23. Ps 38.9 (37.10 LXX).

24. Ps 139.13 (138.13 LXX). Here "my inward parts" is literally "my kidneys."

25. Mt 28.19.

themselves had God the Father in heaven as their instructor, they then induced others to share in the same grace. For they no doubt remembered how Christ enjoined them regarding this matter, expressly saying, "Freely you have received, freely give."²⁶

Accordingly, the divine Paul clearly articulated the deep mystery of the economy of the Incarnation when he wrote, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin. He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not [549] walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit."²⁷ For Christ became sin²⁸ for our sake, as it is written,²⁹ and yet he was certainly not guilty of sin in any way.

Now it is not our habit to speak foolishly in this matter, since Christ did not know how to commit transgression, being God by nature, and having come forth from God the Father. Yet he became a sacrificial offering for sin, for "Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us."³⁰ We say therefore that he also became sin. For he was sacrificed, as I said, so that by his blood he might gain possession of everything under heaven. For "we were bought with a price," in accordance with the Scriptures,³¹ and we are not our own, but belong to him who became sin for us, in order that he might deliver us from the original transgression and make us holy through partaking of his holy flesh, and of his blood also.

This, we note, was declared to us ahead of time by the divine law, for it is written in Leviticus: *And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to Aaron and his sons, and say, 'This is the law of the sin offering. In the place where they slay the burnt offerings, they shall also slay the sin offering before the Lord. It is most holy. The priest who offers it shall eat it. It shall be eaten in a holy place, in the court of the taber-*

²⁶. Mt 10.8.

²⁷. Rom 8.3-4.

²⁸. Or "a sin offering."

²⁹. 2 Cor 5.21.

³⁰. 1 Cor 5.7.

³¹. 1 Cor 6.20.

nacle of witness. Anyone who touches its flesh will become holy. When any of its blood is spattered upon a garment, that upon which it was spattered shall be washed in a holy place. And the clay vessel in which it was boiled shall be smashed; but if it was boiled in a bronze vessel, it shall be scoured and rinsed with water. Every male among the priests shall eat it; it is most holy to the Lord."³²

You can now see how God commanded the sin offering to be sacrificed. A male goat served here as a figure of Christ, who, as I said, became sin for us. For he was counted among the lawless, was crucified with thieves, and was also called a curse, since it is written that "cursed is everyone who is hanged upon a tree."³³ Although in the divine economy he lowered himself in this way on our account, he was and is holy, not by way of sharing in something received from another as we do, but rather with respect to his nature, since he himself is God. And we believe that through him creation is made holy, even those we call angels, and even those which are eminent in glory and which are superior and exalted, by which I mean, the "thrones and principalities," and those we call "seraphim." There is, however, no other way in which these might be made holy except it be from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit.

Christ, then, although he became sin, remained that which he was, that is to say, he continued to be holy as he was by nature God. Moreover, "he does not give the Spirit by measure," in accordance with what John said.³⁴ Now, that the death of his flesh, which took place for the destruction of the flesh, was holy and pure, being well-pleasing to God the Father in a manner similar to incense offerings, the law clearly spoke of when it said, "*In the place where they slay the burnt offerings, they shall also slay the sin offering before the Lord.*" Christ is a burnt offering, that is, one which is wholly and entirely, and not just partially, dedicated to God the Father as a pleasing aroma. [552] Therefore, he is truly "*most holy*." For in him we have been sanctified, and he is our whole justification, and he is moreover the sanctification of the spirits above, as I said a moment ago.

32. Lv 6.25-29 (6.18-22 LXX).

33. Dt 21.23; Gal 3.13.

34. Jn 3.34.

It says that *"the priest who offers it shall eat it."* Now again observe that, with respect to all its affairs, the church is administered by sacred and divine laws. For those elements that pertain to the sacrifice belong to the one who offers it. Everyone who has been brought up under the laws of the church knows what I mean. That the church of God is the especially fitting place for divine ceremonies³⁵ and that the mystery of Christ is necessarily performed within it, is plainly indicated when to those matters I have spoken of it adds, *"It shall be eaten in a holy place, in the court of the tabernacle of witness."*

Now at that time there was only one tabernacle in the wilderness and one temple after that, which Solomon built in Jerusalem. And those who offered sacrifices outside the tabernacle suffered death.³⁶ For the sacred Scripture says, "A man of the people of Israel who slaughters a calf, a sheep, or a goat in the camp, or who slaughters any of these outside of the camp, and does not bring it to the entrance of the tabernacle of witness so as to present it as a gift to the Lord before the tabernacle of the Lord, blood shall be imputed to that man who has shed blood. That person shall be utterly destroyed from among the people."³⁷

Surely then, to wish to reside with ungodly heretics and to cleave to them in fellowship is a lawless act and a profanity under the condemnation of death. For they sacrifice the sin offering outside the holy tabernacle and do not perform the sacred offering in the holy place. For the church is one, just like the temple of old, and the tabernacle was also one, showing forth the beauty of the church by way of figures. We, then, will sacrifice the offering for sin in the holy court, as it were, and we will eat holy flesh; that is, we will be sanctified when we partake of the mystical blessing. For the law bears witness to this when it says, *"Anyone who touches its flesh will become holy."*

Now the sprinkling of the blood of the sacrifice equates with the mystical blessing. For it also said, *"When any of its blood is spattered upon a garment, that upon which it was spattered shall be*

35. *hierourgia*, "religious ceremony."

36. Var. "the punishment of death."

37. Lv 17:3-4.

washed in a holy place." So what wonder is it if the spiritual living creature, namely he who was a man, sanctifies, when even those vessels brought for the sacred ritual were sanctified in a manner that was entirely appropriate for them? Accordingly, these vessels were not employed for a common purpose, and that is why some of the vessels were washed and some were shattered. For how can those objects that were used in the divine ceremonies be designated for human purposes?

Also, that the partaking of the meat of the sacrifice is sacred and not applicable to any others except only to those whose habit it is to contend against sin and to be manly in virtue, is signified when it says, "*Every male among the priests shall eat it; it is most holy to the Lord.*" Now tell me, did the law decree that the female should be kept from receiving the blessing? [553] We do not say this, for she is sanctified together with us men. But these matters are types and shadows. So through that which is male and consecrated, it aptly signifies those who are manly and consecrated spiritually in Christ. We have been called, then, to partake of the most fragrant sacrifice, as a consecrated and acceptable race, a holy nation, a royal priesthood,³⁸ "young men and virgin women, old and young together."³⁹ For in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female, but we are all one,⁴⁰ sharing in the one loaf, in accordance with what is written.⁴¹

So come now, and with mouths wide open and with voices that do not cease, let us honor by the giving of praise the King of all and the Redeemer, who is Christ, through whom and with whom be glory to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

Concerning the cleansing of the leper

Sin reigned over us and held those upon the earth in its power, because the mind of man was thoroughly set upon evil

38. Cf. 1 Pt 2.9.

39. Ps 148.12.

40. Cf. Gal 3.28.

41. Cf. 1 Cor 10.17.

from his youth,⁴² and chose to turn its passions unrestrainedly towards base things, making the prestige of virtuousness to be as nothing. "But God, who is rich in mercy and compassion," as it is written, "on account of his great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in transgressions, made us alive with Christ, and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places."⁴³ For we have been richly blessed in Christ with goodness from on high, and we have washed off our ignominious and wholly wretched sin, having been called through faith to sanctification. Moreover, having become partakers of the life that is everlasting, we shall be accepted, and offered up to God the Father as a pleasing aroma. For what the blessed Paul writes is true, that "we are the fragrance of Christ to God."⁴⁴ For the sacred word persuades us that, although sin exercised its tyranny over us for a time, we are rid of its defilement, we have rubbed off its filth, and in Christ we have made an end of our former disease.

This is what is written in Leviticus: *And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "This is the law of the leper, at the time when he is cleansed: He shall be brought to the priest, who shall come to him outside the camp. And the priest shall examine him, and behold, he sees that the leper has been healed of the plague of leprosy. Then the priest shall order⁴⁵ that for the one who is cleansed they shall bring two living birds that are clean, some cedar wood, spun scarlet, and hyssop. The priest shall order that they slaughter one of the birds over an earthen vessel, over fresh⁴⁶ water. And as for the living bird, he shall take it with the cedar wood, the spun scarlet, and the hyssop, and he shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was slain over the fresh water. Then he shall sprinkle the one who is cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and he shall be clean,⁴⁷ and he shall let [556] the living bird go into the open field. The one who has been cleansed shall wash his clothes, shave*

42. Cf. Gn 6.5; 8.21.

43. Cf. Eph 2.4–6.

44. 2 Cor 2.15.

45. Cyril, both here and in the following sentence, writes "shall bring" (*pro-saxeî*), where the LXX reads "shall command" (*prostaxeî*), which is the meaning found in the Hebrew text.

46. Lit. "living."

47. Hebrew: "he shall pronounce him clean."

*off all his hair, and bathe in water; then he shall be cleansed. After this he shall enter into the camp, and shall remain outside his house for seven days. On the seventh day, he shall shave off all his hair; he must shave his head, his beard, and eyebrows, and all his hair, and he shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and he shall be clean."*⁴⁸

Now at the literal level the text is plain, and if one wished to study it further there is nothing profitable to be gained unless it is interpreted spiritually. So then, suitably transforming the feebleness of the letter into the mystery of Christ, we shall discuss that. It will, however, be helpful for us if a few important words of explanation are stated first. For leprosy is an undesirable disease that affects the bodies of certain people. It is one that is especially rapacious, and always spreads inwards in some way, increasing its effects in the parts of which it has taken hold. So the disease is quite impossible to cure, not responding to the skill of physicians, the treatment of those who are expert in such things. Rather, it only ceases on those rare occasions when nature seems to resist it, and its harmful effects are removed by the help of God.

The law, however, stated that the leper should be sent out of the camp. For when God gave his commandments to the people of Israel, Moses, the instructor of sacred rites, was told, "They are to send every leper out of the camp, and every person with a venereal disease, and everyone who is unclean on account of a dead body."⁴⁹ We are not, of course, saying that the law finds fault with bodily diseases. For it would be utterly absurd that those suffering from a disease against their own will, rather than being shown the pity they deserve, should suffer punishment in addition. But those things given through the all-wise Moses in the form of figures were to point to⁵⁰ some reality. For whereas leprosy produces deadness in the flesh, sin also affects the soul, and as it penetrates the human mind through dead works, it makes it outright useless and lifeless. So by the dead things of the flesh we evidently mean abominable and profane passions and the desire to set our minds on earthly things. That

48. Lv 14.1-9.

49. Nm 5.2.

50. Lit. "give birth to."

is why we said at the start that when we were dead in transgressions, God the Father made us alive together with Christ.

Therefore, through something that is outwardly visible, the text prepares us for a more subtle⁵¹ interpretation. For the law sends out of the camp those afflicted with leprosy, indicating figuratively that those who are deadened by sin, having minds which are, in effect, marred by various passions, and who suffer greatly from a loathsomeness within their own selves, must be separated from the multitude of the saints and be removed outside the number of the holy ones. For one who is wicked, stained with profanities, should not by any means be gathered with those who are righteous, nor should one having the defilement of sin, which cannot be washed off, be among those who have been sanctified. For "What fellowship is there," it says, "between light and darkness? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?"⁵²

So for those who wish to live uprightly, [557] it is necessary for their progress that they take pains to avoid the wicked. The inspired Scripture itself also urges us to do this, for God says to his own people, "Come out, come out from among them, and be separate, you who carry the vessels of the Lord."⁵³ The vessels of the Lord might be understood as virtues of various kinds. Thus the divine Paul says, "Put on the whole armor of God."⁵⁴ So then, portrayed in the figure of the leper is the way in which God keeps the one afflicted and defiled with the disease of sin away from the multitude of the saints.

It was also most certain, however, that some of those suffering from this condition were restored from it. For it is sometimes the case that we cease from sins when we change our thinking and resolve to do and to set our minds on things that are better and more proper. What is the law for? Does it not show the way for those who wish to repent? Does it not open up the gate of salvation? Do not doubt this. For the Master is

51. Or "refined," "detailed."

52. Cf. 2 Cor 6.14-15.

53. Is 52.11. The Harleian Codex lacks the repetition of the initial imperative ("Come out") from the citation.

54. Eph 6.11.

good and loves humankind. Note how he expressly says, "Return, you who are backsliding, and I will heal your wounds."⁵⁵ And through Ezekiel he also says, "Repent, and turn from all your lawless deeds, O house of Israel, and they shall not be the cause of your punishment for iniquity."⁵⁶ What, then, is the way of salvation? Who is he that delivers those who have sinned from being punished as they deserve? Who is he that redeems and rescues so readily? It is our Lord Jesus Christ, he who gave himself as a ransom for all,⁵⁷ and who sanctifies us by his own blood.

2. Observe once more how the mystery is present in the shadows written in the law. For the leper was brought outside the gate to the priest who was ministering according to the law. And when he indicated that the leper had recovered from his disease, and that it had now ceased and come to an end, the requirements for cleansing were carried out, in accordance with the will of the Lawgiver. For two clean birds were taken, with some cedar wood, and spun scarlet, in the form of a thread, and also some hyssop, in the form of a stalk. Then one of the birds was slaughtered over some water, while the other, as we were told just now, was dipped in the water and in the blood of the bird that had died, and it was then released without being harmed in any way. Next the priest, having sprinkled the person suffering from leprosy seven times with the water, set him free from the indictments of the law. So his hair was shaved, and he could then enter into the camp without being reproved, and into his own home after staying outside it for seven days.

Now we who formerly bore the deadness of sin, who were defiled with many forms of wild passions, who were suffering, as it were, from spiritual leprosy in that we went astray and served the creation, were brought to the great, holy, and pure priest, who is God, as the blessed Paul said.⁵⁸ And we were brought to him by God the Father. For when speaking to the Jews, Christ

55. Jer 3.22. Cyril omits the word "children," present in both the Hebrew and LXX, from the phrase, "O backsliding children."

56. Ezek 18.30.

57. Cf. 1 Tm 2.6.

58. Cf. Heb 7.26.

said, "Do not grumble among yourselves. No one is able to come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him."⁵⁹ For God the Father, by his own power, brings those who are afflicted to the Son. For he came to heal the brokenhearted, and to open the eyes of the blind.

If [560], then, we set aside our impotence and weakness in order to perform those things that are well-pleasing to God, let us have a heart given to industriousness, holding fast to works of virtue, and let us pursue the way of life that is glorious and worthy of admiration, acknowledging the one who is truly the Master by nature. Thus we say, in the words of the psalmist, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, who is gracious towards all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from corruption, and crowns you with mercy and compassion."⁶⁰

Note how the person suffering from leprosy is brought to the priest who has come outside the gate, away from the camp. For it was to us who were cast out, so to speak, abiding in a place outside the holy and sacred city, which is the church of God, that Christ came sharing our likeness. And having come, he made us clean through his holy baptism and his body.⁶¹ For he was slain for us, and showed us a saving remedy—the raising up of himself upon a tree to suffer death itself for us. This is depicted for us in shadows within the sacred Scriptures, for two clean birds were taken. This was, then, a figure of Christ who came from heaven⁶² above, as the bird is a creature that flies in the sky. For Emmanuel came down to us out of heaven above, as it says in a certain passage, "No one has ascended into heaven except the one who came down from heaven, the Son of God."⁶³ The wise John also writes: "He who comes from above is above all."⁶⁴

Now the birds were clean. For the Lord is truly clean and undefiled, knowing no sin. Even though it says there were two

59. Jn 6.43–44.

60. Ps 103.2–4 (102.2–4 LXX).

61. Var. add "and his blood."

62. The Greek word for "heaven" is the same as that used for "sky."

63. Jn 3.13. Cyril puts "Son of God" in the place of "Son of Man," which is the original reading of the verse and is that appearing in the Harleian Codex.

64. Jn 3.31.

birds, however, we are certainly not saying that we understand there to be two Christs. This matter brings us to a learned and necessary consideration. For the Only-Begotten, although he was God by nature, bore the flesh of the holy Virgin, and was indeed composed, as it were, of two, by which I mean his heavenly nature and his human nature, in a way that is ineffable and beyond understanding. Notwithstanding, the Lord Jesus Christ is one. The account, then, in these two birds gives consideration to the coming together of two into one.

As the law regarding the two birds signifies the mystery of Christ in many different ways, it also said that they should take some cedar wood. And this was a figure of his holy flesh, which was not able to suffer corruption. For this wood does not decay.

Hyssop too, being something warm, was a figure of⁶⁵ the working of the Holy Spirit, through which we are made zealous⁶⁶ in spirit, and the uncleanness in our insides is, after a manner, melted away. For the hyssop stalk is by nature hot and is able to dispel the cold and unclean humors gathered within our bodies. So Christ sets us free, as I said, by the working of the Spirit, from the hidden passions inside our minds. Also the stalk of hyssop is very appropriately placed over fresh water. For we were baptized in the Holy Spirit and fire, in accordance with what is written.⁶⁷ So the warm stalk, as I said, is applicable to the working of the Spirit.

Again, the spun scarlet [561] shows in itself the manner in which the Only-Begotten became man. For the Word, although he was God, was intertwined with flesh and blood. The scarlet material, then, represents both blood and flesh, for it looks the same color.

The bird, then, was slain over fresh water in which the remaining bird was dipped, along with the other items, and was then released without suffering any harm, as I have already stated. For Christ was sacrificed for us, yet he himself was both in death and over death. For "he was put to death in the flesh,"

65. Var. "signifies."

66. Cf. Rom 12.11. The word translated "zealous" (*zeontes*) could also be translated "being warm."

67. Cf. Mt 3.11; Lk 3.16; Acts 2.3-4.

in accordance with what is written, "and was made alive in the spirit, in which he also went and preached to the spirits in prison who were disobedient long ago."⁶⁸ For insofar as he is apprehended as having become man, he submitted himself to death, but insofar as he is truly life and from life, he showed himself stronger than death.

So the living bird was dipped in the death of the bird that had died. The law is here signifying in a figure that the Word, who by nature is both life and from life, took upon himself the death of his own flesh. For the flesh that he assumed did not belong to another, but was his very own.

Once the leper was sprinkled seven times with the water, he was finally discharged from being counted a leper. So Christ, as I said, declares us pure, sanctifying us⁶⁹ by means of holy baptism. For this, I believe, is what the sevenfold sprinkling indicates. The blessed Paul also understood this and said, "Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more."⁷⁰ It is the abundance of grace, therefore, and the bringing about of perfect cleansing, as it were, that is signified by this sevenfold act.

After the leper had been sprinkled, his hair was shaved. For having been cleansed through holy baptism, it is as though we put off those things that sprouted out of the flesh, that is, the innate desires within us, together with our other failings, as if they were in the form of hair. And this is Christ working within us. For the Word is living and active,⁷¹ being so sharp as to cut away sin, freeing the mind from impure passions.

Once the leper was shaved, he then entered into the camp, but not yet into his own home. For when we have been cleansed, as I said, we join with the saints, and henceforth live together with the holy and sacred race. We thus enter into the house of God, though not yet into our heavenly dwellings. For this gift is reserved for the saints in the age to come.

So the one who had been cleansed entered the camp, and having waited for seven days, he then finally entered his own

68. 1 Pt 3.18–20.

69. Var. add "abundantly."

70. Rom 5.20.

71. Cf. Heb 4.12.

home. For after the present age, having received the cleansing through Christ, we shall abide in heavenly dwellings. Each of those who have been sanctified will abide in his own house that has been allotted him. For it is not temporal rewards that shall be conferred upon believers, but their calling and the pledge of the Spirit have regard to the hope of good things, and so in time grace will shine forth, which is the goal of our hope in Christ, through whom and with whom be glory to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen. [564]

*Concerning the synagogue of the Jews that
came to fall because of unbelief*

1. The great decline of the Jewish synagogue, along with the disobedient and unruly conduct of the Jews, was revealed by God long ago when he said through Ezekiel, "All the house of Israel are contentious and hardhearted."⁷² Accordingly, the Savior himself denounced the city that rejected salvation and the perverseness that was within her, saying, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often have I desired to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Behold, your house is left to you desolate."⁷³ For the God of all was indeed willing to save them by numerous means. But many of them, as they had completely turned aside to an unrestrained behavior and had slighted the heavenly forbearance, were carried away by their wild and terrible ways to destruction and perdition.

So having administered through Moses those laws by means of which it was possible for them to be instructed properly in the knowledge of virtue and to benefit greatly from an understanding of the truth, God later appointed the holy prophets to be of help to them. This was so that they might have other teachers of excellent things, who knew how to direct them

⁷². Ezek 3.7.

⁷³. Mt 23.37-38. The adjective "desolate," present in the verse being cited, and which also appears in the Harleian Codex, has been supplied.

into a glorious and upright way of life, and into all manner of praiseworthy conduct. Though they ought, however, to have rendered thanksgiving to the God of all, and to have accepted gladly their instructors and to have regarded them as worthy of all honor, and though they should have been especially eager to change for the better and to be guided by a more appropriate voice, they were stubborn and hardhearted and fell into an even worse state of infirmity. Thus they came to ruin, and at this the prophet Jeremiah said, "The house of Israel has fallen, and there is no one to raise it up."⁷⁴

Now let us further consider the matter that is expressed in figures⁷⁵ through the words written by Moses. For in Leviticus we read as follows: *And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, "When you enter the land of the Canaanites, which I am giving you as an inheritance, and I put the plague⁷⁶ of leprosy in the houses of the land of your possession, and the one whose house it is comes and tells the priest, 'It seems to me that there is a plague in my house,' then the priest shall command that everything be removed from the house before he comes to inspect the plague, and so nothing that is unclean shall be in the house. After that the priest shall enter to examine the house, and the priest shall inspect the plague. And behold, if the plague is in the walls of the house, there will be greenish or reddish indentations, which appear deeper than the surface of the wall. Then the priest shall come out of the house to the door of the house, and the priest shall close off the house for seven days. The priest shall come again on the seventh day, and shall inspect the house. And behold, if the plague has spread in the walls of the house, then the priest shall command that they take out the stones in which the plague is present and cast them outside the town, in [565] an unclean place. And they shall scrape the inside of the house all around, and they shall pour the plaster that was scraped off outside the town in an unclean place. Then they shall take other scraped stones and put them in the place of the former stones, and they shall take other plaster, and they shall plaster the house. If, however, the plague comes back again and breaks out in the house after the stones have been removed, and after the house has been scraped and replastered, the priest shall go in and look, and if the plague has spread in the house, it is*

74. Cyril seems to have in mind Am 5.1–2.

75. Var. add "beforehand."

76. Or "contamination," "infection."

a persistent leprosy in the house; the house will be unclean. Then they shall pull down the house, its timbers and its stones, and they shall carry all the plaster of the house outside the town to an unclean place."⁷⁷

It next says that anyone who sleeps, eats, or even enters the house, will be unclean, and after that the priest is brought again to make an inspection. It says, "*But if the priest comes and goes in and inspects it, and behold, the plague has not at all spread in the house after it has been plastered, then the priest shall pronounce the house clean, because the plague is cured. And for the purification of the house he shall take two clean, living birds, some cedar wood, spun scarlet, and hyssop. He shall slaughter one of the birds in an earthen vessel in⁷⁸ fresh⁷⁹ water. Then he shall take the cedar wood, the spun scarlet, and the hyssop, with the living bird, and he shall dip them in the blood of the bird that was slain over the fresh water, and with them he shall sprinkle the house seven times. So he shall purify the house with the blood of the bird that was slain, with fresh water, with the living bird, the cedar wood, the hyssop, and the spun scarlet. Then he shall release the living bird outside the town into the open field, and so he shall make atonement for the house, and it shall be clean.*"⁸⁰

In these matters the whole mystery concerning the synagogue of the Jews and those things that happened to them from beginning to end are clearly revealed to us, as well as those things that would come about through Christ. So we shall now diligently go through each of these things again in detail, as we are able, opening up the earthiness of the literal sense, and we shall bring to light the beauty of the spiritual contemplation contained within it.

2. The leprosy, then, that occurs within the human body is a disease that cannot be cured by the skills of physicians, but it only relents, as with certain other diseases, when it is overcome by the great and almighty hand of God and his all-capable power.

Now once leprosy has taken hold in those suffering from it, their skin looks different from how it was before. For the disease

77. Lv 14:34-45.

78. LXX here reads "over."

79. See n. 46 above.

80. Lv 14:48-53.

is accompanied by a certain difference in color which distorts the natural color, changing it to one that is unnatural, and the appearance of the body is such that one could reasonably suppose that it shows a change of one's inner disposition, and the transition from a good state of being to one that is worse. For it is often the case that many people, when they change from a good manner of disposition to one that is abject, and leave behind the condition that is appropriate to their nature, stain their own soul with various kinds of depravity. It is as though they were holding to two appearances for themselves, for they neither entirely fall so as to lose the good completely, yet neither do they wholly escape depravity and obstinacy. [568]

Seeing, then, that such is the state of affairs that occurs at times within us, and that this tends to be what happens within the sphere of the human condition and disposition, divine Scripture frequently makes use of the one afflicted with leprosy as a symbolic image. When it depicts, as though on a writing tablet, each aspect of their condition, it brings to the fore the character of an individual person. But when it is the intention of Scripture to indicate that such a condition pertains to a nation, a city, or a region, then it brings in the figure of a house, as this includes those who live in it, and so it manifestly depicts a multitude of people. When you hear, therefore, about the house that is infected with a leprous disease, you should interpret it as the whole synagogue of the Jews, who evidently had become irrevocably corrupted by their own passions, and who took no thought whatsoever for the oracles they received from God. Rather, they turned away so that they could do those things which would give them more pleasure than those which would make them more virtuous.

Now when it says the priest is told that a plague of leprosy appears to have broken out in the house, we do not mean that someone goes to the priest who pronounces the law to bring an accusation against the house. Rather, it is as though he were requesting a remedy from a physician for what had come to pass.

So, if we grant that the synagogue of the Jews has become leprous, who, then, is the one that pronounces this condition? Let us consider, as best as we can, who the priest is. Surely the

role of the one making the pronouncement may be assigned to the band of the holy prophets, who declared to the high priest of all and the guardian of our souls, which is Christ, even before he became man, the disease of rebellion that the Jews suffered from. Yet these did not hate the profanity of their ways and their corruption, nor were they overcome by any enmity towards them. Rather, they were overcome by reverence for their Benefactor, and confessing with tears the transgressions of the people together with them, they made entreaty that they be shown mercy despite all.

It is in this connection that we may take what could be described as the deplorable leprosy of the Jews and the way in which the blessed prophet Jeremiah was greatly affected by it, praying in this wise: "Our sins have risen up against us, O Lord. Act for us for the sake of your name, because our sins are many before you. We have sinned against you. O Lord, the hope of Israel, save us in the time of troubles. Why have you become like a stranger in the land, or like one born in the land who turns aside to a resting place? Will you be like a person who is asleep, or like a man who cannot save? Yet you are among us, O Lord, and we are called by your name; do not forget us."⁸¹ Again it says, "Alas, my soul! For the godly person has perished from the land, and there is none that is upright among men. They all quarrel to the point of shedding blood; each one grievously afflicts his neighbor. They ready their hands to do evil."⁸² By such lamentations of the prophets we are instructed concerning the leprous condition of Israel.

The priest also gave orders for everything to be removed from the house before he entered to inspect the house.⁸³ Now it is indeed a most fearful thing when God visits our transgressions, and it is necessary that those who are guilty should be punished. For this reason God, as he is benevolent towards the wicked [569], commands them to seek cleansing and for the infirmity that has befallen them to be removed, and thus also the punish-

81. Jer 14.7-9.

82. Mi 7.1-2.

83. The words "before he entered to inspect the house" have been added from the Harleian MS.

ment that would come as a result of the visitation, as when it says, "Wash your heart from wickedness, O Jerusalem, so that you may be saved. How long will your hard⁸⁴ thoughts be within you?"⁸⁵ Some might justly consider "hard thoughts," or those which lead to hardship, to be those by means of which we are brought into punishment for our transgressions.

So observe in these matters that the priest gives orders for the causes—those things with respect to which one might reasonably understand a person to undergo punishment—to be removed beforehand.

3. It next says, "*The priest shall enter to examine the house, and he shall inspect the plague. And behold, the plague is in the walls of the house,*" and also, "*Then the priest shall come out of the house to the door of the house, and the priest shall close off the house for seven days.*" After this period of being separated off that was benevolently granted, and after the seven days that should follow the earlier cleansing, if the foul condition again manifested itself in the form of leprosy, they appropriately called the priest to take the necessary action, the priest being the one who undertook the role of God in these matters.

So once he had again observed the plague, that is, the symptoms that indicated the presence of the diseased condition, the priest separated off the house for the whole of seven days. And God, as he was grieved, and most properly so, over the abuse of the law on the part of the people of Israel, despite his benevolence sent them all into captivity, delivering them into the hands of the Babylonians for a period amounting to seventy years in all, appointing one day for ten years. It says that the house was shut off for seven days, where a day is reckoned as ten years, in accordance with what was spoken by the prophet Ezekiel: "I have appointed you a day for a year."⁸⁶ And this word is confirmed by the angel that made entreaty for the congregation of the Jews in the book of Zechariah, saying, "O Lord Almighty, how long will you show no mercy to Jerusalem and

84. *ponos*, "toil," "labor," "hardship," "trouble."

85. Jer 4.14.

86. Ezek 4.6.

the cities of Judah, which you have disregarded these seventy years?"⁸⁷

It further says, "*The priest shall come again on the seventh day.*" You should understand the return of the priest as nothing other than the restoration of the benevolence of God to the nation, as when it says, "Therefore, thus says the Lord: I will return to Jerusalem with compassion, and my house will be rebuilt within it, says the Lord Almighty, and a measuring line will be stretched out over Jerusalem."⁸⁸ Or again, as it says in this place, "How shall I deal with Ephraim? How shall I protect you, O Israel?"⁸⁹ I will make you like Admah, and like Zeboim. My heart altogether recoils; I am troubled in my reluctance. I will not act against you according to the fierceness of my wrath; I will not abandon Ephraim to be utterly destroyed.⁹⁰ For I am God and not man, the Holy One among you."⁹¹

Now it says, "*The priest shall come again on the seventh day to inspect the house. And behold, if the plague has spread in the walls of the house, then the priest shall command that they take out the stones in which the plague is present and cast them outside the town.*" And after this it states, "*Then they shall take other scraped stones and put them in the place of the former stones.*"

So after the [572] sending away of those former people on account of their offenses, God, who tests everything we do, once again gave his attention to the synagogue of the Jews, which was undoubtedly no longer entirely leprous. Although he did not find them to be completely free of their former foul condition, he did not vent his wrath against them all, but only against those who were responsible for bringing them into such a plight and who were the cause of their affliction. These are the ones he describes as "stones," indicating that they are individual parts of the whole house, that is, of the nation. These were some of the kings, who at that time led the people astray

87. Zec 1.12.

88. Zec 1.16.

89. Here the Harleian MS follows the LXX in adding the repetition of "How shall I deal with you?"

90. The verb "destroy" here is the same as that translated as "plaster" in the quotations from Leviticus (14.42, 43, 48) in section 1, above.

91. Hos 11.8-9.

into a different form of worship, and some of the false prophets, who spoke out of their own hearts, as it is written,⁹² and weakened the devotion of those who heard them. These are those whom he commands to be removed from the house, meaning that they be separated from it, that is to say, that they be cast out to be destroyed. Such is the meaning of what was spoken by God to Jeconiah: "O land, hear the word of the Lord. Write this man down as an outcast,"⁹³ and to the false prophets, "For this reason I have cut off your prophets; I have killed them by the word of my mouth."⁹⁴ And he further says, "Therefore, the leaders of the people shall be cast out from their luxurious houses; they are thrust out because of their wicked practices."⁹⁵ Yet again it says, "Because of uncleanness you have been utterly destroyed."⁹⁶

In bringing in other stones, clean and scraped, to replace those that were removed, it evidently indicates those particular people who in the purpose of God would stand in opposition to the house of Israel and hold it together as a place that was uncorrupted, these clearly being kings, prophets, and holy men. As was spoken by God to the blessed Isaiah: "Thus says the Lord of hosts: Go into the chamber, to Shebna the steward, and say to him, 'Why are you here? And what is your intention here that you have hewn out for yourself a tomb here, and have made for yourself a sepulcher on high and carved for yourself a dwelling in the rock? Now behold, the Lord of hosts will cast out such a man to destroy him, and he will take away your robe and your glorious crown, and will cast you into a great and immense land, and there you will die. And he will bring your fair chariot to shame, and make the house of your prince to be trodden down. And you will be removed from your stewardship, and from your position. And it will come to pass on that day that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, and I will clothe him in your robe and give him your crown, and I will commit your authority

92. Cf. Jer 23.16; Ezek 13.3.

93. Jer 22.29–30.

94. Hos 6.5.

95. Mi 2.9.

96. Mi 2.10.

and your stewardship into his hands, and he will be like a father to those who live in Jerusalem.”⁹⁷

Now it says that “*they shall take other plaster and they shall plaster the house.*” (For “*they shall plaster,*” the word *exaleipsousi* has been put here instead of *perialeipsousi*).⁹⁸ This signifies the appeal that was made to Israel through the holy prophets, who by their good and wholesome words applied “plaster” to those who were sinning. They persuaded them to come willingly to that which pleases God, and to be rid of the pollution that comes from the passions [573], and rather to seek diligently after those things that the Lawgiver deemed profitable for people who worship him to know. Such is what was spoken to them through one of the holy men: “Seek good and not evil, that you may live; and so the Lord God Almighty will be with you.”⁹⁹

Further on, it says,¹⁰⁰ “*If, however, the plague of leprosy comes back again and breaks out in the house after the stones have been removed, and after the house has been scraped and replastered, the priest shall go in and look, and if the plague has spread in the house, it is a persistent leprosy in the house; the house will be unclean. Then they shall pull down the house, its timbers and its stones, and they shall carry all the plaster of the house outside the town to an unclean place.*” For once all manner of remedy had been applied to the people of Israel, and when the removal of the infected stones had been of no benefit at all, and it was also seen that the “plastering” carried out by the prophets, that is, their appeal, was unprofitable, then the priest entered in again and made an inspection. So the Only-Begotten came into this world with a body. When he became man, he made careful examination to see how much the synagogue had changed from its previous baseness to an improved manner of conduct. But when he perceived that it was still caught up in the same passions as before, and was infected

97. Is 22.15–21.

98. Cyril here comments on a textual variant in Greek copies of Leviticus. The basic verb is identical in each case, but it is the compounded prefix that varies. This, in actual fact, makes little difference to the general sense of the term.

99. Am 5.14.

100. This short introduction to the scriptural citation has been added from the Harleian Codex.

with a long-lasting impurity, he commanded that it should be pulled down and sent away to an unclean place. For the whole constitution of the Jews that came into being through the law was dissolved, and the nation was scattered to every unclean place, in accord with what was spoken by the prophets: "And I will scatter them to all the winds,"¹⁰¹ and, "I will shake them out among all the nations."¹⁰² Note this well, and also what was spoken by the Savior concerning the temple that was in their midst: "You see all these things? Truly I tell you, not one stone will be left upon another that will not be thrown down."¹⁰³

It also says, *"Everyone who enters into the house during all the time that it is shut off shall be unclean until evening. And anyone who sleeps in the house shall wash his clothes, and shall be unclean until evening. And anyone who eats in the house shall do the same."*¹⁰⁴ This clearly indicates that everyone who, through a similar way of thinking, joins with the Jews in any way at all will wholly share in their uncleanness.

Then it again brings in the priest to make further examination of the leprous house, for it says, *"If the priest comes and goes in and inspects it, and behold, the plague has not at all spread in the house after it has been plastered, because the plague is cured."* The synagogue of the Jews was indeed demolished since they were unclean on account of their raging against Christ, and they fell out of friendship with God. Although they will remain in this condition for a long time, however, "until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in," in accordance with what was said by Paul,¹⁰⁵ they will be shown mercy by Christ. God will then look upon them once more, as he had looked away from them, and in the latter times he will restore them to righteousness, the righteousness that is wholly through [576] faith and love toward him. So he who is the high priest of all will come and will again look upon them, and finding them in a better condition, he will immediately pronounce them clean and accept them. This is in accord with what was spoken through the holy

101. Ezek 5.12.

102. Am 9.9.

103. Mt 24.2.

104. Lv 14.46-47.

105. Rom 11.25.

prophets: "In that day, says the Lord, I will gather her that was cast out, and I will welcome back her who was crushed, even those I rejected. And I will make her who was crushed a remnant."¹⁰⁶ In another passage it says, "For the people of Israel will abide many days without a king or a ruler, without sacrifice or an altar, without a priesthood or revelations. And after these things the people of Israel will return and seek their God and David their king; and they will stand in awe of the Lord and of his goodness in the latter days."¹⁰⁷

When the priest examines the house infected with leprosy and cleanses it, it says that "*for the purification of the house they shall take two clean, living birds, some cedar wood, spun scarlet, and hyssop.*" It also says, "*he shall dip the living bird in the blood of the bird that was slain over the fresh water. [So he shall purify the house with the blood of the bird that was slain, with fresh water], with the living bird, the cedar wood, the hyssop, and the spun scarlet. Then he shall release the living bird outside the town into the open field, and so he shall make atonement for the house, and it shall be clean.*"¹⁰⁸

4. Now observe clearly how the whole mystery of our Savior and the cleansing that comes through holy baptism is present in these matters. For it prescribes that two living birds which are clean should be taken, so that through these birds you may understand both the heavenly man and God at the same time, these being in fact two natures, distinct with regard to the properties proper to each one. For when the Word shone forth from God the Father, he was from a woman in respect of his flesh, and yet he was not divided, for Christ is one coming from two. And that is why two birds are taken. Also it is to be understood that both birds, as they are one, are living and clean. For the Word is in himself the source of all life and purity, and the temple¹⁰⁹ obtained from the Virgin holds the Word himself.

¹⁰⁶. Mi 4.6-7.

¹⁰⁷. Hos 3.4-5.

¹⁰⁸. The words in square brackets, omitted here by Cyril, have been added from the LXX for the citation to make sense. Cyril himself includes the missing words in previous and subsequent quotations of the same passage.

¹⁰⁹. That is to say, his body (cf. Jn 2.21).

For the body was his very own, and it was not borne by any other. Therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ is one.

In addition to the birds it was also commanded that they should take cedar wood, so that by this you may understand the body of Christ to be incorruptible. For cedar wood is immune from decay, so Christ did not experience corruption. In understanding the holy body of Christ to be incorruptible, the matter of his resurrection then appears extremely credible.

The spun scarlet represents confession of our Savior's death. And so in the Song of Songs with regard to the church it says, "Your lips are like a thread of scarlet, my sister, my bride."¹¹⁰ For as the lips of the church always proclaim salvation through the blood of Christ and command that the one who draws near should make a confession of faith in him, so its lips are suitably likened to a scarlet thread, and its participation in the mystical blessing also involves a proclamation of the death and resurrection of Christ. Moreover, things that we persuade those coming to faith to confess in the first instance, we then bring to holy baptism and to perfection through the blood of the everlasting¹¹¹ covenant, as it is written.¹¹² So by means of the scarlet is signified the confession of faith in the blood of Christ.

Through the hyssop the heat of the Holy Spirit is signified. [577] For this is a warm plant that works against the effects of the cold. Such is the operation and power of the Holy Spirit within us.

It says that the man who purifies the leprous house "*shall take the living bird, the cedar wood, the hyssop, and the spun scarlet, and he shall dip them in the blood of the bird that was slain over the fresh water, and with them he shall sprinkle the house seven times. So he shall purify the house with the blood of the bird, with fresh water, with the cedar wood, the hyssop, and the spun scarlet.*" The law again makes it plain that it is in no other way possible for the synagogue of the Jews to be cleansed from the defilement of unbelief and to be rid of the stain of their manifold transgressions, except through the blessing of Christ alone and through the confes-

110. Song 4:3.

111. Var. omit "everlasting."

112. Cf. Heb 13:20.

sion of faith in him, which is brought to its completion and to sanctification in holy¹¹³ baptism.

Note how a complete picture of Christ is represented to us by what is spoken here, and how faith in him and confession of him are both signified. For through the living bird, you are to understand the life-giving heavenly¹¹⁴ Word, which lives eternally, and through the bird¹¹⁵ that was slain, you are to understand the precious blood of the temple¹¹⁶ that suffered, for we say that he suffered in the flesh, even as in his own body. Through the wood that does not rot, it signifies his incorruptible flesh; through the hyssop, the Spirit; through the scarlet, the confession of the blood of the covenant; and through the fresh water, the life-giving grace of baptism, which was clearly represented at the time of our Savior's suffering when his holy side issued forth water with the blood. It is with this water that it says the house was to be sprinkled so that it could be purified. This is in accordance with what was spoken by Ezekiel the prophet: "And I will take you out of the nations, and will gather you from the countries, and I will sprinkle pure water upon you and you will be cleansed."¹¹⁷ It also prescribes that the house should not be sprinkled just once, but seven times, for "where sin increased, grace abounded all the more."¹¹⁸

Then, in addition to these matters, the Lawgiver enjoins that "*he shall release the living bird outside the town into the open field, and so he shall make atonement for the house, and it shall be clean.*" We take the aforementioned "*house*" to be a figure of the synagogue of the Jews, that is, of the whole nation. Now we grant that a town is a place that contains many houses. You may understand this to be our own world, which contains many races of men, and it is girded all around by a manner of circular wall, which is the firmament. Furthermore, the wide and clean place of the open field is the world above. So then, through the bird

113. Var. omit "holy."

114. The adjective *ouranion* may also indicate something pertaining to the sky, and so may equally be applied to a bird.

115. Var. "through the blood of the bird."

116. See n. 109 above.

117. Cf. Ezek 36.24-25.

118. Rom 5.20.

being released into the open field outside the town, the Lawgiver is teaching us about the departure of Christ from the world and his ascension into heaven. For although he went to be with God the Father, over us all and over the synagogue of the Jews, he will make atonement, and we will be cleansed. As the most-wise disciple John says, "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins; and not for ours only, but also [580] for the sins of the whole world."¹¹⁹ Therefore, it was well spoken when Christ said to the Jews, "If you believed Moses, you would believe in me, for he wrote about me."¹²⁰ Through him and with him be glory and might to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

*Concerning the fact that Aaron could not
always enter the holy of holies*

1. The Only-Begotten, although he was God by nature and was from God the Father, brought himself down into our estate, and appeared on earth, as it is written, and lived among us humans. He did this for no other reason than, as the divine Paul says, "that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make atonement for the sins of the people."¹²¹ For the law given through Moses, revealed to those of long ago with angels acting as mediators, appointed as priests men who suffered from the common infirmity of human nature, and because of this it was necessary for them to offer sacrifice for their own inadvertent sins as they did for those of the people.¹²² "But the word of the oath that came after the law appoints the Son who has been made perfect for ever."¹²³ "Therefore, he is able to save completely¹²⁴ those who come to God through him, as he always lives to intercede for them."¹²⁵

119. 1 Jn 2.1-2.

120. Jn 5.46.

121. Heb 2.17.

122. Cf. Heb 5.5; 7.27-28.

123. Heb 7.28.

124. Or "for ever."

125. Heb 7.25.

So Christ would make atonement, but it was not in any way for himself, as the saying is true that "he committed no sin."¹²⁶ Rather, he did it for us. And this the divine Paul made very clear to us when he wrote of him as the one "whom God set forth as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood."¹²⁷ Therefore, it says that "he entered into the holy of holies once for all, having obtained eternal redemption,"¹²⁸ and, "by one offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified."¹²⁹

It is we who have been saved, and it is he who bore our sins and suffered for us, for he willingly laid down his life for us. Yet he came back to life, for he was by nature God, and he is now in heaven at the right hand of the Father, and he always lives to intercede for the saints, as I just said.

These matters are again expressed by the shadows of the law. How this is so I will make apparent.

It is written in Leviticus: *And the Lord said to Moses, "Say to Aaron your brother that he may not go inside the veil of the sanctuary, before the mercy seat¹³⁰ which is upon the ark of testimony, at any hour he chooses, or he will die; for I will appear in a cloud over the mercy seat."*¹³¹ For it was necessary that Aaron, since he was appointed to serve as a picture and a type of the priesthood of Christ, should not have access into the holy of holies at any hour he chose, that is to say, at all times, or this would be to misrepresent the beauty of the mystery. For Christ entered once for all, as I said, once he had obtained eternal redemption.

So to permit Aaron to enter into the holy of holies not just once a year but at any time at all would be to transgress the truth expressed in types. God decreed, therefore, that Aaron should observe this command so that he would not die. Now if death was the punishment for the one who disregarded the shadow, and who violated what was a figure of the reality, what,

126. 1 Pt 2.22; cf. Is 53.9.

127. Rom 3.25; var. omit "in his blood."

128. Heb 9.12.

129. Heb 10.14.

130. Or "place of atonement," "atonement cover."

131. Lv 16.2.

then, will the chastisement be for those who err [581] with respect to the reality itself, which is Christ? This in fact is what the Jews who refused to believe in him did when they dishonored him in numerous ways, even though he plainly said, "I am the truth,"¹³² that is to say, the fulfillment of the types found in the law. For Christ is the end of the law and the prophets, for this is what the most-holy Paul, an expert in the law, wrote.¹³³

Aaron, then, was forbidden to enter the holy of holies at any time he chose, in order that the beauty of the mystery might stand intact and unviolated, and that some light might be cast upon the shadows for us. So there was access just once each year, and this was done in a certain way, and there was no departure from what was proper. God ordained the procedure, saying, "*Thus shall Aaron enter the sanctuary: with a calf of the herd for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering. He is to put on the consecrated linen tunic, and the linen breeches shall be upon his body. He is to be girded with a linen sash, and he shall put on a linen cap. These are holy garments; he is to wash his whole body in water and then put them on. From the congregation of the people of Israel he shall take two young he-goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering. Then Aaron shall present the calf as his own sin offering, and he shall make atonement for himself and his household.*"¹³⁴ *And he shall take the two he-goats, and shall set them before the Lord at the entrance of the tabernacle of witness. Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats, one lot for the Lord and one lot for the goat to be sent away.*"¹³⁵ *Then Aaron shall bring forward the goat on which the lot for the Lord fell, and he shall offer it as a sin offering. But the goat on which the lot fell for being sent away, he shall present alive before the Lord, to make atonement upon it, that he may send it away and release it in the wilderness.*"¹³⁶ So here the manner in which the offering was made has been laid out for us.

Then Aaron offered the calf as a sin offering for himself and his household. When the calf had been slain, and also the ram

132. Jn 14.6.

133. Cf. Rom 10.4; Mt 5.17.

134. Var. omit "and his household."

135. *apopompaïos*.

136. Lv 16.3-10.

for the burnt offering as the law prescribed for it,¹³⁷ it says, *"He shall take a censer full of burning coals from the altar before the Lord, and he shall fill his hands with fine compound incense. He shall bring it inside the veil, and he shall put the incense on the fire before the Lord. The smoke of the incense shall cover the mercy seat upon the testimony, and he will not die. Then he shall take some of the blood of the calf, and shall sprinkle it upon the altar¹³⁸ with his finger; he is to sprinkle the blood seven times with his finger."¹³⁹ Then to this it adds: *"And he shall slaughter the goat before the Lord as the sin offering which is for the people, and he shall bring some of its blood inside the veil, and he shall do with its blood as he did with the blood of the calf."*¹⁴⁰ God commanded these¹⁴¹ things to be done so that atonement would be made for the impurities of the people of Israel and for all their sins.*

Now the blood [584] of the calf and that of the ram was not only applied to the mercy seat and the inner part of the tabernacle, that is, the holy of holies, but also to the altar of burnt offerings in the first part of the tabernacle. For it further said, *"And he shall go out to the altar before the Lord, and shall make atonement upon it. He shall take some of the blood of the calf and some of the blood of the goat, and shall put it on the horns of the altar all around. He shall sprinkle some of the blood on it seven times with his finger, and cleanse it, and consecrate it from the impurities of the people of Israel."*¹⁴²

Then it continues: *"And Aaron shall bring forward the live goat, and he shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and declare over it all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their unrighteousness, and all their sins, and shall put them upon the head of the live goat. Then he shall send it away into the wilderness by means of a man prepared for the task. And the goat will take their iniquities*

¹³⁷. Cf. Lv 16.11.

¹³⁸. Var. "upon the mercy seat on the east side, before the mercy seat," following LXX.

¹³⁹. Lv 16.12–14.

¹⁴⁰. Lv 16.15.

¹⁴¹. Var. "all these."

¹⁴². Lv 16.18–19.

upon itself into the barren region, and the man shall release the goat in the wilderness."¹⁴³

2. These matters were at that time revealed in figures. Such was how things were, and this is what was also practiced. But since the shadow has passed away, and the time of restoration has been instituted, we shall now, as we apply our minds with the utmost astuteness, transform the object of the law to that which pertains to the mystery of Christ. For our Lord Jesus Christ "entered into the holy of holies once for all, having obtained eternal redemption." Yet this was "by the blood of the eternal covenant," "not through the blood of goats and calves," but "through his own blood," blotting out the sin of the world.¹⁴⁴ For he was slain not on his own account, but for our salvation.

So we shall give special attention to these shadows of the law. Now it was especially appropriate, or rather even necessary, that the divine Aaron should offer sacrifice for his own inadvertent sins. For it should not be understood that as a man he was any better with regard to sin, but in such a matter his correspondence to Christ no longer applies; far from it, in fact. For Christ, since he was God, was eminently sinless in his own nature. It was nevertheless in him and through him, that there came the cleansing of those being sanctified, that is, both of the priests and of the people.

Note how Aaron, in the offerings that were made for him, sets out the figures of the spiritual sacrifice and the spiritual aroma found in Christ. For a calf and a ram were used for burnt offerings. Now by the calf Christ is again to be understood as one. For those things presented to God for the saints are truly immense, and such offerings are exceedingly full in nature. And the calf is a sacred animal which excels all others that are suitable for sacrifice. The calf, then, represents to us the perfect¹⁴⁵ sacrifice. Yet there was also a ram for a burnt offering, for our Lord Jesus Christ was a pleasing aroma to God the Father, as though he were in himself nullifying the abominable and malodorous nature of the sin of the world.

¹⁴³. Lv 16.20–22.

¹⁴⁴. Cf. Heb 9.12–13.

¹⁴⁵. Or "complete."

Notice how, when Aaron was instructed to make an entry into the holy of holies at the appointed time and carefully to carry out offerings for his own inadvertent sins, he was not to appear at that time in the attire of his high priestly office. [585] Rather, it says, "*He is to put on the consecrated linen tunic, and the linen breeches shall be upon his body. He is to be girded with a linen sash, and he shall put on a linen cap. These are holy garments; he is to wash his whole body in water.*" This was also the usual attire of all the priests officiating under the law.

So how, then, as I see it, should these matters be explained in a reasonable manner for our benefit, or rather what is their true explanation?

Now from the fact that Aaron sacrificed for his own transgressions it does not follow that he should not be seen as a figure of Christ, who knew no sin. For the dress that was especially appropriate for him, the very attire of the high priestly office, typified the beauty of the kingship and priesthood of our Savior.

That it is impossible for anyone to be able to enter into the holy of holies, and also into the true tabernacle, which the Lord set up and not man, without first being cleansed in the water of regeneration,¹⁴⁶ is plainly revealed in the law when Aaron was instructed to wash himself in water, if he was to have access into the holy of holies.

God also commanded Aaron to take coals from the altar and to take them inside, that is, within the veil. He gave instructions that a handful of fine incense should be burned, and when this was done, it says, "*the smoke of the incense shall cover the mercy seat upon the testimony.*" This was a figure of Christ, who was sacrificed like a calf, and who was also offered up as a burnt offering like a ram, and who fills the whole of the holy tabernacle, that is, the church, with a spiritual aroma, as we are told, "Your name is ointment poured forth; therefore, the maidens love you. They have drawn you; we will run after you for the fragrance of your ointment."¹⁴⁷

But we shall now go back to explain things from the begin-

¹⁴⁶. Cf. Ti 3.5.

¹⁴⁷. Song 1.3-4.

ning. For the unfolding of our thoughts will directly lead to a proper treatment of these matters. So a calf and a goat were led forth as offerings for Aaron, and two goats for the people, as well as a ram as a burnt offering. For it is written, "*he shall cast lots for the goats: one lot for the Lord and one lot for the goat to be sent away.*" It is necessary to speak of the nature of the mystery that lies within these things. Now some believe that one of the goats was released in the wilderness as an offering to a certain¹⁴⁸ unclean demon that had been cast out.¹⁴⁹ We, however, say that this opinion consists of nothing but absurd superstition, which may justly be accused of resorting to the false notions of the Greeks. But more than this, and I shall add this without any hesitation, an even greater matter is that we find this view to lead to the inequitable notion that the law is the originator of sin against God,¹⁵⁰ and yet in many different ways it delivers us from the error of polytheism, and shows forth the Lord of all to be one in nature, and is also wont to give instruction pertaining to the knowledge of the truth.

Now one of those people whose practice it is to think in a right manner might directly ask: So why, then, did it command that the animal, namely the goat that had been presented to God, should be separated and sent away as though it were some offering to an evil and hostile power? And also, what [588] importance is there in the act we see Aaron performing when he laid his hands upon the goat and denounced the sins of the people of Israel? So then, should it not be thought that the view in question consists of utter stupidity, or of Greek impiety, and is bound up in perverse thinking? How could there still be any doubt that it is open to such an accusation?

3. What is it, then, that was being done? For two male goats, in good condition and of equal size to each other, were brought forward, both of the same age, of the same color, and suffering no sort of defect. Then two lots were inscribed with the names of the goats, providing the designations that the Lawgiver

148. Var. add "evil and."

149. This is the same adjective (*apopompaios*) meaning "sent away," elsewhere applied to the goat. The term has the additional sense of "abominable."

150. In commanding that an offering should be made to a demon.

thought especially fit to give. One bore the name "Lord," and the other "Sent away." So when the goats received their names, the name of one was "*of the Lord*," and that of the other "*of the one sent away*." This was on account of the fact that it was to be sent away, for when this name was given to it we do not understand it to be a demon that was called "Sent away," but we take it to be spoken of the animal itself. The "Lord," on the other hand, for this was the name of one of the goats, as I said, was slain in an equally fitting manner. And Aaron consecrated the inner part of the tabernacle with blood, and also the outside part and the altar of burnt offerings upon which they performed sacrifices according to the law. And the other goat, that is, "Sent away," after Aaron had denounced over it the sins of the people of Israel, was sent out into a desolate region.

So Christ is signified by means of both goats, for while he died as a man, he was also sacrificed for us, as though in the form of a goat. For the goat was slain for the forgiveness of sins, and it consecrated the church, which is understood in the figure of the inner part of the tabernacle, as well as those under the law. For, as I said, the altar itself was also consecrated with the blood of the goat according to the law, and "without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater."¹⁵¹

Surely, then, there is no perfection under the law, nor does the ministration according to the law have the ability to sanctify anybody. For it is necessarily the case that it is Christ who is able to make perfect, and who by his own blood consecrates those practicing the ministration under the law. Therefore, the divine Paul, with regard to himself and to those called from among the circumcised, in one place says, "We know that a person is not justified by works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we also have come to believe in Jesus Christ,"¹⁵² manifestly so that we might have the justification that comes from him.

Christ, then, was slain for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures. Yet he rose to life again and departed to the region inaccessible to men, that is to say, heaven, carrying away our sins, for in a certain place it says, "He bears our sins, and suffers

¹⁵¹. Heb 7:7.

¹⁵². Cf. Gal 2:16.

for us.”¹⁵³ He, I believe, is the one that was sent away. For he was sent away, as it were, from where we are to the city above, to appear now in the presence of God on our behalf.¹⁵⁴ And this the blessed John affirms to us when he writes, “Little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the atoning sacrifice for [589] our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”¹⁵⁵ For we maintain that in Christ we have been cleansed, and by his wounds we have been healed.¹⁵⁶ And he is an advocate for us, and has gone back¹⁵⁷ into the region where humankind cannot go, of which the wilderness was a figure. For he entered the world¹⁵⁸ to be a forerunner on our behalf, and he has restored the way for us, a new and living way,¹⁵⁹ that enters inside the veil. It is Christ, then, who, in the figure of a goat bearing our sins, was the one sent away.

Now the other goat, as I said, was slain for sins. Yet the identity and resemblance of the two goats in all respects showed that at the figurative level the two were one. This was so because the goat that was slain did not come back to life again, for such an occurrence would have appeared to be miracle-mongering, and nothing else. But the Deity is never ostentatious, even though he is able to perform all kinds of wonders. Thus two goats were especially chosen which had the same spotless appearance as each other, just as was doubtless also done in the case of the cleansing of the leper, where the Lawgiver issued a command saying that two birds should be obtained, of which one was slain and the other released in the wilderness. For by means of innumerable distinct illustrations the law has trained us in the mystery of Christ, through whom and with whom be glory and might to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, now and always, for ever and ever. Amen.

153. Is 53.4.

154. Cf. Heb 9.24.

155. 1 Jn 2.1–2.

156. Cf. Is 53.5; 1 Pt 2.24.

157. Var. “hastened back.”

158. Var. “heaven.”

159. Cf. Heb 10.20.

BOOK TWELVE: NUMBERS

Concerning Christ and the synagogue of the Jews



HE WRETCHED Jews were found to speak out against Christ with a harsh and crude tongue in numerous ways. [592] One learns, however, from the events that happened that the matter was not to go without their being punished. For although Israel was God's firstborn, and for this reason possessed eminent glory, and while they were beloved and especially chosen, they were made lower than the nations, and were put in last place, or rather were placed among all manner of calamity. This the Lord proclaimed to them beforehand, saying through Hosea, "Woe to them, for they have turned away from me. They are wretched, for they have transgressed against me. Though I redeemed them, they spoke lies against me."¹ There were no words so disagreeable that they did not dare to say them. For they spoke in an ill manner, not understanding what was written: "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those that rule it will eat its fruits."² Since they raged against Christ, loosening their tongues against him in unrestrained slander, as I just said, so they fell from the hope that is in him, and they doubtless paid no heed to the one who said, "This is your lot and your portion, allotted to you for your disobedience to me, says the Lord."³

Now, that the Jews became guilty of the charge of blasphemous speech, and that they would receive punishment for their

1. Hos 7.13.

2. Prv 18.21.

3. Jer 13.25.

bitter raging against Christ, we should most readily allow also from those events recorded in Numbers. There it reads as follows: *Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian wife Moses had taken, for he had married an Ethiopian woman. They said, "Has the Lord spoken to Moses only? Has he not spoken to us too?" And the Lord heard it. (Now the man Moses was exceedingly meek, more than all men who were upon the earth.) At once the Lord said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, "Go out, the three of you, to the tabernacle of witness." So the three of them went out to the tabernacle of witness. Then the Lord came down in a pillar of cloud, and stood at the entrance of the tabernacle of witness. Aaron and Miriam were summoned, and they both came forward. And the Lord said to them, "Hear my words. If there is a prophet of the Lord among you, I will be made known to him in a vision, and I will speak to him in a dream. Not so with my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my household. With him I will speak face to face,⁴ in plain view and not in obscurity; and he has seen my glory. So why were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" The great anger of the Lord was upon them, and they departed.⁵ Then the cloud went up from the tabernacle, and behold, Miriam was leprous, as white as snow. And Aaron looked at Miriam, and behold, she was leprous. He said to Moses, "I beg you, my lord, do not lay this sin upon us, for we were ignorant in the matter of our sin. Do not let her be as one who is dead, like a miscarriage coming out of the mother's womb, with half her flesh consumed." Then Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, "O God, I beg you, heal her!" And the Lord said to Moses, "If her father had only spat in her face, would she not be ashamed? For seven days she shall be set apart outside the camp, and after that she shall come back in." So [593] Miriam was set apart outside the camp for seven days, and the people did not move on until Miriam had been cleansed.⁶*

These events are related to those mentioned previously. For they are not very far removed from what was contemplated in those other matters but have a meaning that is of a very similar nature, since they speak of the mystery, and present the shame of the synagogue of the Jews in abusing Christ. So the man-

4. Lit. "mouth to mouth."

5. Some copies of the LXX say "he departed."

6. Nm 12.1-15.

ner of the transgressions differs very little. For the synagogue did indeed become leprous in this way, and became unclean, corrupting itself with many and varied misdeeds. In the events of this passage it formulates for us the charges regarding the continual raging of the Jews against Christ, and depicts their boastfulness and conceit. Yet it also shows the meekness of the one who said, "Learn from me, for I am meek and humble in heart."⁷ It presents, moreover, the benevolence of him who judges righteously, and who does not always bring the full extent of his wrath upon those who transgress, but after he wounds he binds up, restoring soundness and good health.

So, as the overall intention of what has been set before us in these matters has been summarized in a few words in this section, we shall now take separately each of the things that are stated and unfold the meaning lying hidden within them. We do this with the help of God, who opens up a door for the word, saying to those who put their hope in him, "I will give you the treasures of darkness; I will open up for you hidden, unseen treasures."⁸

2. Now Aaron and Miriam spoke against the all-wise Moses on account of the Ethiopian woman he had married, and they said, "*Has the Lord spoken to Moses only? Has he not spoken to us too?*" Here were two foolish complaints against Moses—first that he had taken an Ethiopian wife, and second when they said, "*Has the Lord spoken to Moses only? Has he not spoken to us too?*" For the first carries an indictment of breaking the law, while in the second it is said that Moses was not to be placed among the great, nor indeed did he possess any special gift that the others did not have, since God had appeared and spoken to various others also.

So we shall speak of these in order, dealing with the first complaint first. And we shall again transform the things here expressed in figures into the very Christ himself.

Now Moses had in fact taken a wife much earlier, when he made the Midianite woman, the daughter of Jethro, his spouse. And then, when a long time had passed, he married the Ethio-

7. Mt 11.29.

8. Is 45.3.

pian, who was both a foreigner and black. And yet the Lawgiver had plainly declared that the people of Israel's race should not by any means intermarry with foreigners. For this is what is written: "You shall not give your daughter to his son, and you shall not take his daughter for your son."⁹

With regard to this matter the great Moses was judged by Aaron and Miriam to be a transgressor of the law, since in all probability they did not understand that through him the mystery was truly foreordained by way of a type. This is something we shall now make clear as we are able, dealing with the nature of the event particularly with reference to Christ himself, to whom also [596] we shall now apply the person of Moses. For Christ is a lawgiver and a mediator between God and men, as that man also certainly was. And Moses himself also indicated that "the Lord your God will raise up a prophet like me for you from your own kinsmen."¹⁰

Aaron should be taken as a figure of the Jewish priesthood, and Miriam carries out the role of the synagogue.¹¹ So the elders of the Jews spoke out against Christ our Savior, and the synagogue also spoke with them, accusing him of transgressing the divine commandments, for they said, "If this man were from God, he would not break the Sabbath."¹² They were also outraged for another reason, because he married a black¹³ woman, that is, the church of the Gentiles, and in a way he married her as well as the first woman, the Israelite, which is the synagogue. And it is not difficult for one who is familiar with the gospel writings to perceive that they were enraged because their practice of vain observance was being dissolved, as well as those things which were spoken through Moses in figures.

From the prophets one might very easily gather the proof that Christ would also marry the church of the Gentiles, made black through her darkened knowledge and behavior, as the true light was not yet within her to make her form splendid and

9. Dt 7.3.

10. Dt 18.15.

11. By "synagogue" here Cyril means the larger Jewish community.

12. Cf. Jn 9.16.

13. Var. add "and beautiful."

white. It seems most fitting to me that the light was displayed when the Savior revealed it through¹⁴ the economy of his Incarnation. And so he preached to those who were Samaritan foreigners, and after a certain manner he laid the foundations among them for the beginning of the Gentile church.¹⁵

But one can very readily see that at that time foreigners remained outside the congregation of Israel. For when Christ sent out his disciples to proclaim the kingdom of heaven, he said, "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."¹⁶ Do you see how he placed those people outside of the sheep of the house of Israel? So his marriage to the Israelite woman, that is, the synagogue, was not yet ended, but he was still pleased to live with her. He then further betrothed to himself, as it were, and married the black foreign woman, which is to say, the church of the Gentiles. This is why he said to the Jews with whom he was disputing, "I have other sheep, which are not of this fold. I must lead them also; and there will be one flock, and one shepherd."¹⁷ It is also most striking how he rebuked them as unbelievers when they expressly asked him, "If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in the name of my Father bear witness of me. But you do not believe, because you are not of my sheep."¹⁸

Christ has now called his own sheep out of the Gentiles. Indeed, the Jews¹⁹ became greatly enraged and vexed against him, as against one who loved foreigners, and who had no regard for the Deity. Since they looked to the law, they said, "Are we not right in [597] saying that you are a Samaritan, and you have a demon?"²⁰ For "If you were not," they said with respect to the Samaritans, "a lover of Greeks and of foreigners, you would never mix with Gentiles." And they said, "Unless the de-

14. Var. "fulfilled."

15. Var. "of the call of the Gentiles."

16. Mt 10.5-6.

17. Jn 10.16.

18. Jn 10.24-26.

19. Var. "Pharisees."

20. Jn 8.48.

mon that lives within the Greeks were in you," for they called idolaters demon-possessed because the devil was in them, "you would not consider the transgression of the commandments of the law to be of no account." Yet the things done by Christ were rather a fulfillment of the law,²¹ and not a transgression of it, as he said, "I did not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it."²² For there was a transformation only of the letter of the law in order to bring out the truth. So the accusation against Christ with regard to the "black woman"²³ and to his seemingly wayward conduct should be taken as corresponding to the charges brought against Moses.

To this we shall further add the closely associated matter of the reproach made against Moses, and shall again transform our understanding of what was stated from type to reality. For it says, "*The Lord did not speak to Moses only, but he has spoken to us too.*" These words are prideful, an utterance of vain conceit. Perhaps Miriam and Aaron ought to have more correctly been thinking that they should not too hastily rise to be equal in status to the one who had deservingly heard: "I know you above all others, and you have found favor with me."²⁴ They ought rather to have devoted to God those gifts²⁵ which they had been honored to receive, not going beyond the position assigned for them, nor seizing for themselves the honor that was given to Moses. What may be understood for sure is that no benefit came from their extreme arrogance.

Yet our Lord Jesus Christ is also here to be understood, who declared to the Jews the purpose of God the Father that was known to him alone by virtue of his nature, and who said, "I do not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me, he gave me a command about what I should say and what I should speak."²⁶ And again he said, "The words that I speak are not mine, but those of the one who sent me."²⁷ Besides this he also

21. Var. omit "of the law."

22. Mt 5.17.

23. Namely, the Gentile church.

24. Ex 33.12.

25. Lit. "thank offerings."

26. Jn 12.49.

27. Cf. Jn 7.16; 14.10, 24.

spoke out against the impious scribes and Pharisees, who were audacious and excessively arrogant over the fact that God had spoken to their fathers, and for this reason chose to disbelieve in Christ. For they said, "We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he is from."²⁸ Note, then, how what they said shows they knew full well that God had spoken to Moses, for they spoke almost the same words as on that former occasion, yet even more harshly: "Has God the Father spoken to Christ alone, and not to our fathers (at Sinai, that is)?"

It also says, *And the Lord heard it. (Now the man Moses was exceedingly meek, more than all men who were upon the earth.)* Miriam and Aaron took occasion against the meekness of Moses as though it were arrogance. Yet more than this, God was angered that Moses had suffered insult,²⁹ and he came unbidden to express his just indignation against those who dared to despise his lawful minister, claiming him as his own.

You should also understand that it was so with respect to Christ. For the Pharisees were heedless of the meekness and benevolence that he possessed, to the point of disdain. But one could [600] surely see that they would not escape punishment from heaven. For if one abuses the Son, God the Father will become angry. For, even without being told, he knew through his divine knowledge the words spat out by the Pharisees in their contempt for him.

3. Following these matters it says, *At once the Lord said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, "Go out, the three of you, to the tabernacle of witness." Then the Lord came down in a pillar of cloud, and stood at the entrance of the tabernacle of witness.*

The account further indicates that God would be the judge of those who speak against our Savior Jesus Christ, and that he would come down to execute his wrath as a punishment upon those who dared to revile him and to strive after the same honor as himself. Yet the judgment comes wholly through the Son, as it is evidently the case that the one who begat him is not to

²⁸ Jn 9.29.

²⁹ Var. "was silent" (reading *siôpôntos* for *dusôpountos*).

be distinguished from him, according to the words, "I am in the Father, and the Father is in me."³⁰

When Miriam and Aaron came and stood before the one who judges justly, he said, "*Hear my words. If there is a prophet of the Lord among you, I will be made known to him in a vision, and I will speak to him in a dream. Not so with my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my household. With him I will speak face to face, in plain view and not in obscurity; and he has seen the glory of the Lord.*"

Moses was specially chosen, and for this reason he was attended with divine visions more than others, and it is well testified that he had the extraordinary ability to hear divine utterances. Yet this is truer with regard to matters pertaining to Christ. For God the Father did not speak in the Son as he had spoken in the prophets. Whereas they were provided by the Spirit with the knowledge of the things they needed to learn, he knew the divine counsels in his spirit without being taught, since he had the wisdom and counsel of the one who had begotten him. Also, while the blessed prophets viewed God's glory through dark figures, since no one had ever seen him, God is in fact seen by him who is by nature his only Son. And so God is perceived in a way that is appropriate for one who is divine. Our Savior himself would testify of this, saying, "No one has seen the Father, except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father."³¹

The Jews then, who held that God had spoken to their fathers, were not acting reasonably, but profanely, when they disdained Christ, who said that he spoke whatever he heard from the Father. For the things given at Mount Sinai were shadows, types, and figures, producing a knowledge of what was being prescribed that was in a way hidden and extremely obscure. But Christ was one who had himself heard the words of the Father, although because of the indispensable need to be understood it was fitting for him to speak in a more earthly manner.

The text also presents the significant distinction between Christ and all others in that "*he is faithful in all my house.*"³²

30. Jn 14.10.

31. Jn 6.46.

32. Nm 12.7; cf. Heb 3.2.

Does this not demonstrate the more individualistic and limited nature of the economy that came through the law and the prophets, while that which came through Christ was more general and universal? For the law brought deliverance to the one house of Israel, but it is not so with Christ, who by his own blood purchases for God the Father the whole world through [601] faith in him, in accordance with what is written.³³

And so it says, "*Were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?*" For something such as this was spoken long ago through the prophet to the impious Pharisees on account of their futile babbling against Christ: "But come here, you lawless sons, you offspring of adulterers and harlots. Whom did you mock? Against whom did you open your mouths? And against whom did you unleash your tongues?"³⁴ For the Pharisees, in giving license, as it were, to³⁵ a tongue that fought against God, all the more readily blasphemed matters relating to Christ. Giving vent to their extreme arrogance, they belched forth words without meaning.

Over these people the singer of the Psalms was³⁶ very much grieved and said, "I said to the transgressors, 'Do not transgress,' and to the sinners, 'Do not lift up your horn. Do not raise your horn on high, and do not speak unrighteousness against God.'"³⁷ For they did in fact act unlawfully against him whom they should have least of all condemned in such an ungodly manner. They were found lifting up their horn against him, not conceding that Christ alone knew the will of the Father, but rather were themselves affirming boldly what they claimed to know when they said, as was already stated earlier, "We know that God spoke to Moses,"³⁸ as though this were also the reason they were unwilling to obey Christ.

Then the cloud went up from the tabernacle of witness. And Miriam instantly appeared leprous, and not in a slight way, but she

33. Cf. Acts 20.28.

34. Is 57.3-4.

35. Lit. "loosening the reins of."

36. Var. add "with good reason."

37. Ps 75.4-5 (74.5-6 LXX).

38. Var. add within citation: "but this man we do not know."

was *as white as snow*. For at the raging of the Jews and at their profane exploits against Christ, the divine and pure³⁹ Being became indignant, and was disposed after a certain fashion to be extremely angered. So he departed from the synagogue in accordance with what was said by Christ: "I have forsaken my house; I have left my heritage."⁴⁰ For as the Lord came down in a pillar of cloud, he also departed like a cloud, according to the figure found in the literal sense. And once he had separated himself, as was reasonable, from the synagogue of the Jews, it was immediately seen to be unclean, and not unclean in a slight manner, but it was diseased to an extreme degree. For when it says that the one afflicted with leprosy was made exceedingly white, it refers to the intensity of the disease. What is there that is whiter than snow?

For it was indeed fitting, or rather it was necessary and beyond question, that the synagogue of the Jews, which fell away from the care of the one who preserved it, should come into all manner of calamity. Therefore, the wild horde of those who loved to ridicule and mock was punished with uncleanness and shame, in accordance with what was justly said to God by the saints: "Fill their faces with shame, that they may know your name is the Lord."⁴¹

Although Aaron along with Miriam criticized Moses, it was advantageous that he should not be made leprous, even though he deserved to receive the same punishment from him who judged. For as the matter of priestly service was great and valuable before God, it was for this reason he escaped being infected with leprosy. Rather, he was punished by the affliction of the woman who was suffering for this matter, according to what was spoken by God, "Gird your loins and wail, O priests; mourn, you who serve at the altar. [604] Enter in sackcloth, you that minister to God, for the grain offering and drink offering are withheld from the house of our God."⁴²

39. *akêratos*, "unmixed."

40. Jer 12:7.

41. Cf. Ps 83.16 (82.17 LXX). In the latter part of the verse Cyril differs considerably from the LXX, which says, "and they will seek your name, O Lord."

42. Jl 1.13.

Aaron further said to the all-wise Moses, *"I beg you, my lord, do not lay this sin upon us, for we were ignorant in the matter of our sin."* For those who were of the race of Israel, who were not strangers to the nature of the synagogue of the Jews according to the flesh, and who were appointed as keepers of the mysteries of our Savior, these would offer up prayers on behalf of those who had sinned in ignorance, even though they had stumbled with them in the first place. They besought Christ that they not be subject to the wrath of the Father, which very thing Paul did when he said, "Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them⁴³ is that they may be saved."⁴⁴ Yet he was saying this as a steward of the mysteries of God, and as a minister of the divine proclamation, which Aaron also was at that earlier time.

Now when Moses cried out on behalf of her who was stricken with leprosy, entreating for her to be healed, God deferred his consent, saying, *"Let her be set apart for seven days outside the camp, and after that she shall come back in."*

4. This account shows us as though in a picture that while the divine nature is quick to show mercy, and is in some way most ready to be entreated, yet it is hardened by the frequency of our failings or by their magnitude, and holds back from showing benevolence towards the guilty.

And the account, as we understand it, also indicates that much intercession by the saints went up to God on behalf of Israel. But since it could not be entertained that he should have seen fit not to punish them, that they should not have been condemned for whatever it was they happened to have done, he extended a second measure of mercy following the punishment. From these events, then, it is not at all difficult to see that God is often provoked through our errors with the result that even the benevolence of his especially loving and most peaceful nature is sometimes slow to act.

The future slaughter that would take place in the country of the Jews was revealed to Jeremiah the prophet through the Holy Spirit, when they would be ravaged by the military action of the Babylonians. Since it was presented as though many had

43. Var. "Israel."

44. Rom 10.1.

already fallen and were seen dead, God said to the holy prophet, "Woe is me, for my soul faints because of those who are slain. Run about in the streets of Jerusalem, and see and consider, and seek out in its open places, if you can find a man, if there is anyone that executes justice, and pursues faithfulness, and I will pardon them, says the Lord."⁴⁵ Note here how God is grieved over the slain, and how he is ready and willing to have mercy upon Jerusalem. Yet he in effect restrains himself and holds back the divine peaceableness on account of the extreme degree of sin. He nevertheless seeks the opportunity to show compassion, with the intention that even for the sake of one man he would lay aside the expression of his wrath, for he appointed⁴⁶ those who had a will to do so to prove there was one faithful man in the city.

So because she had been afflicted with leprosy, Miriam was cast out, but it says that *the people did not move on until Miriam had been cleansed*. For we who believe in Christ likewise wait for the cleansing of the Jews, namely the cleansing that comes through faith. And then, leaving [605] behind the dwellings⁴⁷ we inhabit in this present life, we will thereafter move into the heavenly city and hasten on to the promised land. The Savior therefore speaks truly when he says to the Jews, "If you believed Moses, you would believe in me, for he wrote about me,"⁴⁸ through whom and with whom be glory to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, now and always, and for ever and ever. Amen.

Concerning those who spied out the promised land

There is indeed a special portion for those who choose to love God, the King of all. The creation of things that are good beyond our comprehension has been prepared for them. The

45. Jer 4:31-5:1.

46. Here in place of the awkward *dieplatteto* ("he formed") we follow the Latin column of PG 69 (*jubebat*) in reading the verb rather as *dietatteto* ("he appointed," "ordained").

47. Or "tabernacles," "tents."

48. Jn 5:46.

blessed prophet Isaiah gave assurance of this when he said, "There is an inheritance for those who serve the Lord."⁴⁹ And again he said, "You will put your trust in the Lord, and he will bring you up upon the good places of the land, and feed you with the inheritance of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken these things."⁵⁰ Surely the promise is true and absolutely sure, for God does not deviate from the truth nor does he ever utter a lie, but he wholly fulfills what has been promised. Knowing this, the divine singer of the Psalms spoke in this manner: "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance;⁵¹ you are the one who restores my inheritance to me."⁵²

Who, then, are those who serve the Lord? Or to whom does such a splendid and precious portion fall? They are those who are eager to perform what is pleasing to God, who know how to press on unfalteringly so as to obtain all of these wonderful things, and who are resolved⁵³ with the utmost determination to overcome all that oppose. This they do not do by their own powers, nor by putting their trust in their own skill, but they hold to the grace from above as their armor, having the God of all as their commander and fellow-soldier. Being so disposed, they say, "I will not put my hope in my bow, nor will my sword save me. For you have saved us from those who afflict us, and you have put to shame those who hate us."⁵⁴

Now those who are good and strong-spirited, and who are more ready to believe, God will make most eminent, apportioning to them good gifts with a generous hand. But those who have chosen to be infected with the most shameful affliction of all so as to disobey,⁵⁵ he will drive out from the congregation of his chosen people, and separate them from everything that is able to bring happiness. And in the presence of each of them

49. Is 54.17.

50. Is 58.14.

51. Var. add "and of my cup" (as LXX).

52. Ps 16.5 (15.5 LXX).

53. Var. "eager."

54. Ps 44.6-7 (43.7-8 LXX).

55. Var. add "and who, being carried away by weakness, engage together in unrestrained and excessive pursuits."

he will declare, as will be most proper, "This is your lot, the portion allotted to you for your disobedience to me."⁵⁶

We find that the Jewish people came under such charges as these. For this reason they have fallen from the hope and have lost a share in their inheritance, even though it belonged to them, since it is true that the promises are theirs in accordance with what the blessed Paul says.⁵⁷ And as they disobeyed the one who called them to these promises, they remain without a portion, and according to the words of the Savior: "The last became first, and the first last."⁵⁸

This also was announced to us beforehand in the most ancient Scriptures. There it reads as follows: *And after these things the people moved on from Hazeroth [608] and encamped in the wilderness of Paran. Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Send men to spy out the land of the Canaanites, which I am giving to the people of Israel as a possession; one man for a tribe. You shall send them out according to their families, all of them leaders." And Moses sent them out from the wilderness of Paran at the word of the Lord; all of the men were leaders of the people of Israel.*⁵⁹

These men selected from the tribes, twelve in number, were separated from the multitude of others. They then went up and spied out the land to see whether the soil was rich or poor, to see if it had good pasture land, and whether it was highly productive or dry and fruitless, to see if the land gave growth to cultivated trees and produced fine crops, or if the fields were able to grow tall when unattended. In addition to this they looked to see what the inhabitants were like, whether they were fearsome in courage and successful in battle, showing no leniency to those they encountered, or whether they could readily be conquered by those who exercised bravery. They also looked to see what the cities were like, whether they were undefended and without walls, or fortified with towers. Moses further instructed that they should also pick some of the fruit to bring back as a form of proof.

56. Jer 13.25; var. add "says the Lord," at the close of the citation.

57. Cf. Rom 9.4.

58. Cf. Mt 20.16; Mk 10.31.

59. Nm 12.16–13.3.

So the men went up and hastened to carry out what they had been commanded. For the requisite period of time they spied out the land, and they also picked a cluster of grapes, one that was extraordinary and such as they had not seen before, truly wondrous and luxuriant. Then they returned to Moses. Nevertheless, they were divided in their opinions. They all thought it proper to declare how good and rich the land was, and as evidence of this they had brought with them the fruit that had been taken from it. Yet at the same time they described the nation that occupied it as bold, strong, and extremely warlike, not disposed to yield easily to any others in their contempt for them. "*For we found,*" the spies said, "*the sons of the giants there.*"⁶⁰ They were so tall and huge, I imagine, that they made the people of Israel seem like locusts in comparison. But Caleb and Joshua expressly spoke of how good and rich the land was, and said, "*If the Lord chooses us, he will bring us into it.*"⁶¹ So they also affirmed that with God fighting for them they would be able to succeed in the task.

When, however, the people of Israel heard these things, the great mass of them immediately put God from their minds, forgetting the signs done in Egypt; and being overcome with much fear, they were reluctant to fight and started a rebellion. They were no longer desirous of what had been promised, and gave no thought for the almighty and irresistible hand of him who was helping them. At that moment they cried like children, and thought their wives and loved ones would be destroyed by the sword in battle. They were even so bold as to say that their servitude in Egypt had been better for them, and the burden of slavery more endurable. Shedding many tears, they exclaimed that they ought to go back down to the Egyptians, and so they stirred up Joshua and Caleb⁶² to a brave response, even though the people stamped in the dust and [60g] sought to stone them.

When the wretched affair reached this point, however, *The glory of the Lord*, it says, *appeared in a cloud over the tabernacle of*

60. Nm 13.33.

61. Nm 14.8.

62. Var. omit "and Caleb."

witness, among all the people of Israel.⁶³ Indeed God intended to destroy them all utterly without a second thought. But when Moses prostrated himself and made entreaty for them, God only just relented. For it says, *The Lord said to Moses, "I pardon them, according to your word. Nevertheless, as I live and as my name lives, the glory of the Lord shall fill all the earth. For all the men who see my glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in this wilderness, and have tested me this tenth time and have not paid heed to my voice, they will surely not see the land which I swore to their fathers; but their children who are with me here, all who know neither good nor evil, every inexperienced youth, to them I will give the land. None of those who have provoked me shall see it. But my servant Caleb, because he had a different spirit in him and he devoted himself to me, I will bring him into the land into which he entered,"⁶⁴ and his offspring will inherit it."*⁶⁵

Note, then, that the charges God made against this disobedience were extremely serious. It was necessary, therefore, that those who had succumbed to it should bear a severe penalty. So we find, as we bring the new teachings alongside the more ancient Scriptures, and show forth the reality corresponding to the shadows, that Israel would indeed suffer in such a way.

Now Moses compelled those who had been chosen from all the tribes to go and carefully spy out the promised land. Yet when they came back and stood there, some of them, ten in number, spoke disparagingly. At one and the same time they put fear into the whole congregation and were the cause of a profane unbelief. But the two other men, Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua also, thought it good to speak well of the land, expressly exclaiming that it was rich and fruitful, and had very fertile fields. Yet the people failed to accept the promise. These two men, however, were made heirs of a heavenly portion, and were honored by God.

2. So now it is necessary to discuss what manner of true and spiritual contemplation is here.

Throughout the books of Moses, whether with regard to the

63. Nm 14.10.

64. Here following the reading of the LXX, preserved in the Harleian Codex, rather than the erroneous "I entered."

65. Nm 14.20-24.

good things prefigured in them by sacred types,⁶⁶ or with regard to the holy land promised to⁶⁷ the fathers, the interpretation the Jews give to these matters has been put to one side, so to speak. For in the writings of the law one can see foreshadowed in figures the mystery of Christ, the sanctification in the Spirit that comes through him, and the hope that is promised to the saints. For the lamb was slain by the people of Israel in Egypt, they were anointed with its blood, and the Destroyer was restrained. And so, that death would be overcome by the death of Christ, and that corruption would henceforth pass by those anointed with the Holy Spirit, were proclaimed in shadows beforehand. And nothing less than the fact that we would lay hold of the happy estate given at the beginning and that man would be restored to the paradise of delight was also shown forth [612] in the law.

Now it prescribed that a feast should be kept in the seventh month, on the fifteenth day of the month, and that they should take in their hands the branches of palm trees, the fruit of goodly trees, the leafy boughs of trees, and willows and chaste trees.⁶⁸ It did not simply command these to be taken, but also that the first day should be designated a holy convocation and the seventh day as well.⁶⁹ This matter showed indirectly that paradise was established at the first period of time, at the beginning of the human race, that is to say, for Adam. And so it shall likewise be established at the last period of time, that is, at the completion of the present age, of which the final day, the seventh, was an especially obvious figure. So the first day was holy and also the seventh. For the period of time was holy within which our forefather Adam kept the commandment that was given him. So also the period of time at the end is holy. For we have been made holy in Christ, having been set free from the charge of sin, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit.

66. Var. add "which allowed, in effect, a careful examination of what had been promised."

67. Var. add "and prepared for."

68. Cf. Lv 23.39-40.

69. Cf. Lv 23.35-36. The biblical text actually speaks of the first and eighth days of the Feast of Tabernacles. Possibly Cyril has confused this with the first and seventh days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (see Lv 23.7-8).

So by means of type and shadow, namely the significance found in the writings of the law, Moses in effect sends forth those who are more ready to learn and who have, as it were, a special kind of mind, so that they should carefully explore the things promised by God. Seeing that for those who wish to obtain the good things which are so awe-inspiring and glorious, "the fight is not against flesh and blood, but against rulers and authorities, and the cosmic powers of this present age," in accordance with what is written,⁷⁰ those who mind the things of the flesh, who give greater value to pleasures which are temporal and things which will eternally perish, refrain from the fight.

Note too that the men of Israel speak out here and there with the voices of the chosen people concerning their dear women and children, overcome as they are with fear for such and with wretchedness.⁷¹

Consider also those who, because of what the Jews said, failed to come to faith at the time of the advent of Christ, the Savior of us all. For our Lord Jesus Christ has freely given the kingdom of heaven to those who believe. Yet he called them to be courageous, in the spiritual sense that is. He also exhorted those who had put their trust in him that it was proper for them to overcome well and truly the oppression of the devil, saying, "Behold, I have given you authority to trample upon snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy."⁷²

But the Jews did not wish to believe, preferring what was earthly⁷³ to the love of God. For when they were invited to the wedding feast, it says that every one of them began to make excuses. One said, "I have bought a field"; another, "I have married a wife, and am not able to come."⁷⁴ Do you see how they shared common passions? Do you see how they suffered from related afflictions? Surely then, the scribes and Pharisees, in not being willing to enter into the divine promise, nor permit-

70. Cf. Eph 6.12.

71. Var. "and with godless reasoning."

72. Lk 10.19.

73. Lit. "bodily."

74. Cf. Lk 14.18, 20.

ting others to do so, were in a way decrying the promise. So it is that they were told, "Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you did not enter in yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering in."⁷⁵ For the people were perishing under the direction of those who led them. Thus God said in a certain place through the mouth of the prophet, "The shepherds have become foolish, and have not sought the Lord; [613] therefore all the pasture has failed, and the flocks have been scattered."⁷⁶

So then, the great multitude of the Jews turned their backs on the promise and are without a share in the grace of Christ. Yet a remnant has been saved through Christ. Of this Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua were plainly a figure. These men spoke numerous things to the people of Israel, urging them to act courageously, describing the land as good and rich, and declaring that they could overcome the nations. But they almost lost their lives, for it says, *The whole congregation meant to stone them.*⁷⁷ They were nevertheless appointed by God to receive an inheritance.

Who Caleb is, then, is clearly shown by his name. For its meaning is "all heart,"⁷⁸ and Jephunneh means "conversion."⁷⁹ So surely those who have a heart that is perfect with God are "sons of conversion" that stand with Joshua.⁸⁰ Also these are those who came to believe, who were considered as being first-fruits by the holy apostles, the men that called Israel, and who are to be understood as comprising the remnant. And in calling them the apostles exposed themselves to danger. Yet they were appointed to receive the holy land as an inheritance. And that the "sons of conversion," namely those who have turned from the commandments of the law to the worship and grace that comes through faith, have obtained a heart that is, as it

75. Lk 11.52.

76. Jer 10.21.

77. Nm 14.10.

78. The name "Caleb" would seem to mean "dog," though if taken as a compound of two separate words it might possibly allow the meaning "all heart."

79. Or "turning about."

80. See n. 84 below.

were, wholly perfect with God, one might learn from what Paul wrote plainly. For he counted the things of the law⁸¹ to be like rubbish, and reckoned them as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing God,⁸² in order that he might gain him and possess his righteousness.⁸³

You may properly understand, then, that Israel would indeed fall away from the promise, but would not entirely perish, as a small portion would be saved. This, I believe, is the remnant, as I have already said. So you see Caleb being brought into the land through the promise of God, alongside the one with whom he was, as it were, yoked together, this being the one who saves, for this is what “Joshua” means.⁸⁴ Thus the divine angel Gabriel, when he came to the holy Virgin and announced the good news of how the Only-Begotten would become man, said, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High.”⁸⁵

It was, therefore, only the remnant of the synagogue of the Jews that inherited the promise and entered into the sacred land. Much more than this, the new⁸⁶ people of God, those who are so through faith, have joined together with the remnant. For the God of all promised to bring into the land with Caleb every young child. The divine David signified this to us when he said with regard to the inheritance of the saints, “Let this be recorded for another generation; and the people yet to be created shall praise the Lord.”⁸⁷ For the inheritance was laid up not for those instructed by the law, but for another generation. And who is this other generation? It is, as I said, the newer people of God who are so through faith, for we were created in Christ for newness of life, having put off the old man with

81. Var. “world.”

82. The New Testament passage alluded to (see following footnote) speaks rather of “knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.”

83. Cf. Phil 3.8–9.

84. This name (*Jésous*) of course being identical with “Jesus.”

85. Lk 1.30–32.

86. The Greek adjective for “new” (*neos*) may also mean “young.”

87. Ps 102.18 (101.19 LXX).

its passions and desires.⁸⁸ And Christ is said to create the two peoples into one new man, [616] thus making peace, and reconciling both in one Spirit to the Father.⁸⁹ Surely then, the children⁹⁰ who were brought into the land with Caleb were a figure of this new people. And it was to these that the divine disciple wrote, "As newborn babes desire the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow with respect to salvation, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good."⁹¹

That the divine Paul also understood the things in the law in this way, and transformed the figure found in the letter to the reality, you may clearly learn as he wrote to the Hebrews, "Just as the Holy Spirit says, 'Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of trial in the wilderness, where your fathers tested and tried me, and saw my works. For forty years I was angry with that generation, and I said, "They always go astray in their hearts; they have not known my ways." So I swore an oath to them that they would not enter my rest.'"⁹² And in order that we ourselves, repudiating such accursed unbelief and removing it far from our souls, should also be found to be heirs of the promise, he further declares, "Take care, brothers, that none of you ever has an evil, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, while it is called 'today,' so that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold the confidence we had at first firmly till the end. When it says, 'Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion,' who was it that heard and rebelled? Was it not all those who came out of Egypt under the leadership of Moses? And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not those who had sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to

88. Cf. Eph 2.10; Rom 6.4; Col 3.9; Gal 5.24.

89. Cf. Eph 2.15-16, 18.

90. Lit. "babies."

91. 1 Pt 2.2-3.

92. Heb 3.7-11.

those who did not believe?⁹³ So we see that they were not able to enter because of their unbelief.”⁹⁴

As an unrestrained nature and a refusal to submit to the divine commands brought about a deprivation of hope for those who wished to pursue such a course, and did not to any degree promote the opposite virtue, Paul prevails forcibly upon us and says, “Therefore, as a promise of entering his rest still remains, let us take care that none of you should seem to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the good news preached to us, just as they did. But the word they heard did not profit them because it did not meet with faith in those who heard. For we who believe enter his rest,”⁹⁵ we who believe in the Savior and Redeemer of us all, which is Christ, through whom and with whom be glory to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever. Amen.

That Christ became our bread of life

1. The divine prophet Jeremiah, when rebuking the Jews’ love of knowledge, most reasonably said, “How can you say, ‘We are extremely wise, [617] and the law of the Lord is with us?’ In vain the scribes have used a false pen. The wise men are ashamed and alarmed, and are taken away, because they rejected the word of the Lord. What wisdom is there in them?”⁹⁶

For even though the scribes and Pharisees were greatly puffed up and had an arrogant attitude on account of their knowledge of the laws, and though they looked down haughtily upon the mass of the people, yet being both foolish and stupid, and suffering greatly from simple-mindedness, they were reproved by their own actions. For they rejected the heavenly wisdom from above, the Word which came forth from God the Father, “who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.”⁹⁷ Therefore, they became

93. Or “did not obey.”

94. Heb 3.12–19.

95. Heb 4.1–3.

96. Jer 8.8–9.

97. 1 Cor 1.30.

base and senseless, dull and blind, as the Savior himself said.⁹⁸ So as they spurned the divine Word and removed the life-giving grace far from them, grieving God by their great disobedience, they were condemned in many thousands of ways and perished in a famine. And this was what was spoken by God through the prophets:⁹⁹ "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will bring a famine upon the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the word of the Lord. And the waters will be stirred up from sea to sea, and from the north to the east people will run seeking the word of the Lord, but they will not find it."¹⁰⁰

Since those who should have possessed this word in great abundance rejected those things that were most wholesome, they received divine punishment as their lot. They suffered the loss of that which was most noble of all, by means of which they could have become rich, as it were, with the good things from above. Those who chose to disobey, who profanely insulted the wonderful divine grace, were afflicted with a famine of divine instruction, and very much so, as was fitting. But for us who believe, Emmanuel has become the bread of life, "the bread that came down from heaven and gives life to the world."¹⁰¹ In him and through him we divest ourselves of the hateful¹⁰² power of surpassing corruption, and put on the heavenly grace from above, namely our incorruption, and so we have been brought to God the Father, resplendent and holy.

And having been richly blessed in such a way, why should we not continue to be so in the world? The letter of the law instructs us in this matter with such cogent arguments. It reads as follows: *And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the people of Israel and say to them: When you enter into the land to which I am bringing you, then it shall be that when you eat from the food of the land, you shall set apart a special offering to the Lord. From the first of your dough you shall set apart a loaf as an offering from the threshing floor,*

98. See Mt 23.17.

99. Var. "prophet."

100. Am 8.11–12.

101. Jn 6.33.

102. *theomises*, meaning either "hated by God" or "God-hating."

so you shall set it apart, even the first of your dough, and you shall give it as an offering to the Lord throughout your generations. But whenever you commit a sin and do not perform all these commandments which the Lord spoke to Moses, as the Lord God instructed you through Moses from the day which the Lord appointed for you and onward throughout your generations, then if [620] it was committed unintentionally, without the knowledge of the congregation, the whole congregation shall offer a calf from the herd without blemish as a burnt offering, a pleasing aroma to the Lord, together with its grain offering and drink offering, as prescribed for it, and a kid of the goats as a sin offering. And the priest shall make atonement for the whole congregation of the people of Israel, and they shall be forgiven, for it was unintentional; and they have brought their gift, a burnt offering to the Lord for their sin before the Lord, for their unintentional sins. So the whole congregation of the people of Israel shall be forgiven and also the foreigner¹⁰³ who resides with you, because all the people were involved in an unintentional sin. If one person sins unintentionally, he shall bring a she-goat, one year old, as a sin offering. And the priest shall make atonement for the person who acted unintentionally, who committed an unintentional sin before the Lord, to make atonement for him; and he shall be forgiven. For both the native-born among the people of Israel and for the foreigner who resides among them, there shall be one law for anyone who commits a sin unintentionally.”¹⁰⁴

This is what is found in Numbers, but in Leviticus the mystery takes on a different form, though the matters presented for spiritual contemplation are not greatly dissimilar. So we shall make mention of these things also, since it is extremely important for us to understand them, and we shall weave together, as it were, the exposition of the two into one.

It is further written: “And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to the people of Israel and say to them: When you enter the land that I am giving you, and you reap its harvest, you shall bring the first of the sheaves of your harvest to the priest. And he shall raise the sheaf before the Lord to be accepted for you. On the day after the first day the priest shall raise it. And

103. Lit. “proselyte.”

104. Nm 15.17–29. The citation in the Harleian Codex does not extend so far, stopping in the middle of v. 25.

on the day when you bring the sheaf you shall offer a one-year-old lamb without blemish as a burnt offering to the Lord. And you shall offer its grain offering, two tenth measures of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering to the Lord as a pleasing aroma to the Lord,¹⁰⁵ together with its drink offering, a fourth of a measure of wine. You shall not eat bread, or new roasted grain, until this same day when you present the offerings to your God. It is a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings.”¹⁰⁶

2. There was, then, a sheaf serving as the firstfruits of the crops and a symbol of new productivity.¹⁰⁷ A loaf of bread was also made from grain that had been harvested, heaped up, and also perhaps laid up in storehouses. So an offering was dedicated to God by those who would then be inhabiting the promised land. It commanded these things to be done so that both might be understood as indicating Christ. He is indeed the life-giving bread from heaven, and also the firstfruits of the dough for those being restored to newness of life in him.

Now Adam was the firstfruits of the older lump of dough, but as he disregarded the commandment that was given, he fell into transgression. And in him the human race was immediately placed under a curse, and sentenced to death and corruption. Christ, however, was the firstfruits of the second lump of dough. He was free of the curse evidently through becoming a curse for us himself. And he overcame the power of corruption through himself being “left alone among the dead.”¹⁰⁸ For having trodden down death, he came back to life again. [621] He was, in effect, both a wonderful dedicatory offering and a bringer of gifts, and was in a kind of way the firstfruits of humanity, since having been made new with regard to incorruption he ascended to the Father. So in the bringing of the bread into the sacred tabernacle and in the dedication of it to God in the holy of holies, it quite appropriately indicates Emmanuel’s return into heaven. For he did not ascend into any place

105. Var. omit “as a pleasing aroma to the Lord.”

106. Lv 23.10–14.

107. Or “vigor,” “fruitfulness.”

108. Ps 88.5 (87.5 LXX). The phrase is literally “free among the dead.”

made by human hands, nor into the copy of those things that are real, but into heaven itself, now to appear before God on our behalf, in accordance with what is written.¹⁰⁹

That Christ is indeed the life-giving bread which came from heaven above you can well understand. Moreover, that he also does away with our sins and frees those upon the earth from their transgressions committed in ignorance, having made himself a pleasing aroma to God the Father for our sakes, you can equally understand, if you see him in your mind's eye as a calf sacrificed as a burnt offering, and as a goat offered for the ignorant faults of the people, for, as it is written, "Who can understand his transgressions?"¹¹⁰

Note how he who established the legal ministration clearly described the cleansing that comes through Christ as being incomparably superior to the ministration of the law. For if you transgressed the precepts of Moses, it says, and some did neglect to keep the ordinances of the legal ministration, it is then you find that the passing over of the offense is granted through the shedding of blood when a calf was sacrificed or a goat offered. Yet this was figurative of Christ. So while the law determined the punishment for transgressors, it is the precious blood of Christ that delivers us from punishment and sets us free from condemnation due to sins committed in ignorance. For he laid down his life for us so that he might do away with the sin of the world. In the loaf of bread, therefore, Christ is understood as life and the giver of life, while in the calf he is further considered as a burnt offering, dedicating himself as a pleasing aroma to God the Father. Also, in the form of the goat he became a sin offering for us and was slain for our sins.

The sheaf might again be interpreted in another way. And what this is shall be stated as far as possible. One might in fact liken the human race to ears of wheat in a field, like something that rises up from the earth, which remains for the full duration allotted for it and is then cut down at the time when death comes to reap it. Thus Christ also said to his holy disciples, "Do not you yourselves say, 'There are four more months and then

109. Cf. Heb 9.24.

110. Ps 19.12 (18.13 LXX).

comes the harvest'? Behold, I tell you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are white for harvest. The reaper is already receiving a reward and gathers fruit for eternal life."¹¹¹

Surely then, as I just said, the produce in the field is very much like people upon the earth. And Christ became one of us, springing forth from the holy Virgin like an ear of grain. Also note that he described himself to us as a grain of wheat, saying, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."¹¹² So he was an offering dedicated to the Father for us, a kind of sheaf, like the firstfruits from the earth, which is attested as being fruitful through the things that it brings forth. [624]

Now an ear of grain is certainly to be understood as being one, just as we ourselves, while we are not one ear of grain, are nevertheless brought together as a sheaf, that is, many ears bound into one. And this matter is necessary for our profit, and one that furnishes a figure of the mystery. For Jesus Christ is indeed one, yet he is also to be understood in the form of an abundant sheaf, and he is so because he possesses all believers within himself as regards their spiritual union. Otherwise, how could the blessed Paul write, "We have been raised up together with him and seated with him in the heavenly places"?¹¹³ Since Christ is one of us, we have become fellow members of his body, and we have been richly blessed in our union with him through his body. Therefore, we say that we are all in him. And so he himself in a certain place says to God the Father in heaven, "I wish that, as you and I are one, so too they may be one in us,"¹¹⁴ just as "whoever is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him."¹¹⁵ Christ, then, is like a sheaf, containing us all within himself, as it were, and dedicating himself on behalf of us all, being the firstfruits of a humanity made perfect by faith and destined to be brought as treasure into heaven above.

¹¹¹. Jn 4:35-36.

¹¹². Jn 12:24.

¹¹³. Cf. Eph 2:6.

¹¹⁴. Cf. Jn 17:11, 21.

¹¹⁵. 1 Cor 6:17.

It states that the sheaf should be presented on the day after the first day, which is the third day.¹¹⁶ For Christ came back to life from the dead on the third day, and returned into heaven, into the true tabernacle, and into the holy of holies.

Yet as the loaf interpreted spiritually also pointed to the calf offered as a burnt offering and to its pleasing aroma, as well as to the goat presented for sins committed in ignorance,¹¹⁷ so too the sheaf can perhaps be interpreted spiritually, though as the one-year-old lamb, the lamb which was perfect. For Christ is totally perfect and deficient in nothing in his own nature. He is, moreover, completely without fault, for he knew no sin, neither was there any deceit in his mouth.¹¹⁸

He is also the wonderful fine flour soaked with oil, that is to say, life in all its abundance and joyousness. For we live rejoicing in him because of the hope laid up for us, and being sprinkled with the grace of the Holy Spirit, we declare in accordance with the words found in the Psalms: "You have anointed my head with oil."¹¹⁹ For we have been shown mercy through faith in Christ, and we are, after a fashion, offered up like smoke rising from the altar together with him, though in a secondary way, just as what we describe as grains are made into fine flour, and these grains we say are the meal obtained from the growth of the field.¹²⁰ For nobody could deny that, although he became one of us in the economy of his Incarnation, Christ is rightly considered as being above us. His life is undoubtedly of incomparably more worth, for it is one that is entirely holy and blameless. But ours are much inferior, like the grains, by which I mean those things made into fine wheat flour. And the fine flour is a figure of his life. Yet the grains are offered up at the altar together with the fine flour. For, as I said, we are offered up like the smoke of the altar with Christ, and also with him we

116. Cf. Lv 23.11, which speaks literally of the "morrow [*epaurion*] of the first day." How Cyril is able to make this the "third" day is unclear, unless he means to say that this fact was particularly true of the passion week.

117. Var. "the goat that purified those who had committed sins in ignorance."

118. Cf. 1 Pt 2.22; 2 Cor 5.21; Is 53.9.

119. Ps 23.5 (22.5 LXX).

120. Lit. "from vegetables."

are all a pleasing aroma and are made acceptable to God the Father. Yet those who do not have Christ are not at all suitable for offering up, for "without me," he says, "you can do nothing."¹²¹ [625]

Now it also says, "You shall not eat until the same day when you present the sheaf." For neither those at the time of the law nor the band of holy prophets had the new food, which is the teachings of Christ, nor did they have the actual renewal of human nature, except perhaps by way of prediction only. So since our Lord Jesus Christ came back to life again, and like a sheaf he presented himself to God the Father as the firstfruits of humanity, we have now also been transformed into a new manner of life. For we conduct our lives according to the gospel, not in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the Spirit. Through him¹²² and with him be glory to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

*Concerning the red heifer that was
burnt outside the camp*

The divine David says in a particular place, "What shall I render to the Lord for all the benefits he has given me?"¹²³ It is very fitting for us also to say such words. For what do we have that could be of equal value to what God the Father has done? "For he gave us his own Son so that everyone who believes in him should not perish but have eternal life,"¹²⁴ and he put aside, in effect, the affection that was properly due to him. For Christ gave himself for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and it is we ourselves who have indeed been saved. He was made weak on account of our sins, suffered pain for our sakes, and endured the death of his flesh. This was not so that he might be seen to remain among the dead with us, but that rising up to life with him and because of him, and returning to a state of incorrup-

¹²¹. Jn 15.5.

¹²². Although the immediately preceding noun is the "Spirit," there is no doubt that "Christ" is here intended by the pronoun.

¹²³. Ps 116.12 (115.3 LXX).

¹²⁴. Cf. Jn 3.16.

tion, we should joyfully say, "O death, where is your victory? O Hades, where is your sting?"¹²⁵

So what, then, is the path that leads to this destination? It is the grace of baptism, through which we are all cleansed of all our filth and are declared to be partakers of the divine nature¹²⁶ through the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us. For it is then that we had our consciences sprinkled clean from dead works, as the blessed Paul writes,¹²⁷ and we became partakers of the mystical blessing. Our minds were filled with grace from above, and we became zealous and worthy of admiration. And what blessing of this kind were we not seen to have?

You can see that what I have said is true, if you understand the divine matters disclosed in connection with the heifer. It says, *And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, "This is the constitution of the law which the Lord has commanded, saying, 'Tell the people of Israel that they should bring you a red heifer, one that is without blemish, which has no defect, and upon which no yoke has been put. And you shall give it to Eleazar the priest, and it shall be taken outside the camp to a clean place, and it shall be slain before him. Eleazar shall take some of its blood and sprinkle the blood seven times towards the front of the tabernacle of witness. Then it shall be burned [628] in his presence; its skin, its flesh, and its blood, along with its dung, shall be burned. And the priest shall take some cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet material, and throw them into the midst of the fire in which the heifer is burning. Then the priest shall wash his clothes, and he shall bathe his body in water. After that the priest shall come into the camp, but he shall be unclean until evening. The man who burned the heifer shall also wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and be unclean until evening. A man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer (and so it continues). And this will be a perpetual statute for the people of Israel and for the foreigners residing among you.'"*¹²⁸

To this the Lawgiver adds that to touch anything that had died caused defilement and made people unclean.¹²⁹ The per-

125. 1 Cor 15.55; cf. Hos 13.14.

126. Cf. 2 Pt 1.4.

127. Cf. Heb 9.14.

128. Nm 19.1-10.

129. Cf. Nm 19.11-16.

son affected in this way would be unclean for the whole period of seven days. He should be cleansed by being sprinkled with the ashes of the heifer mixed with blood in water on the third day, and then again on the seventh. Unless he did this, it says, his uncleanness would remain unpurified. So he would suffer punishment because he had defiled the tabernacle of the Lord. *"That soul,"* it says, *"shall be cut off from Israel, because the water of sprinkling was not sprinkled upon him."*¹³⁰

Now if it happened that somebody died in a house, it says that the house itself, together with everything in it, namely every vessel, would then fall under the charge of uncleanness. If there were any containers standing without a lid, these were also polluted. And it says that anyone out in the open country who happened to touch the body of someone slain, the bone of a dead person, or a grave, would similarly be defiled.

Why it prescribed that such things should be purified we shall state as we are able, and we shall carefully¹³¹ unravel what is obscure at the literal level by means of appropriate reasoning.

2. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the heifer, as he was completely without defect and totally free of all blemish, not knowing how to commit sin. For he could boldly say, "The ruler of this world is coming, and he will find nothing in me."¹³² And also to the Jews he said, "Which of you convicts me of sin? If I speak the truth, why do you not believe me?"¹³³

Note, however, that in the sacred writings he is at one time called a calf and at another a heifer. This is so that through the male animal he is signified as being a leader, while through the female, one that is inferior and in subjection. For as the God of all he is supreme and exercises dominion over all with God the Father, yet he willingly submitted to the law and observed the teachings of Moses, and though he was superior to all, he was also a servant. And it is not in the least surprising that he is also

¹³⁰ Nm 19.13.

¹³¹ Lit. "skillfully."

¹³² Cf. Jn 14.30. Cyril has changed the wording of the last clause, which in the Gospel literally says, "he has nothing in me."

¹³³ Jn 8.46.

called a prophet, one that came in the form of a servant, even though he is the Lord and God of the prophets.

The heifer was red, for the mystery of Christ becoming human was fulfilled in blood, since it is indeed the case that he was obedient to the Father to the point of death, death on the cross, and he achieved the salvation of those upon earth through his own blood. So the redness of the heifer was an especially distinct symbol of blood.

Now although Christ was obedient to the Father, and became a man with us under the law in the economy of his Incarnation, and although [629] he was called a servant, not despising the flesh¹³⁴ when he assumed flesh, yet he was and is free, because he is also by nature God, and is not in the least bit bound by a yoke of servitude, nor is he susceptible to such in any way. For he comes from above, and is above all, having come forth from the free being of God the Father. Thus it said that it was necessary for a heifer to be presented that was red and without blemish, and also one that had not been placed under a yoke to labor. For if the Only-Begotten emptied himself and was willing to be sent down in the form of a servant, how could there be any doubt that it was from on high that he lowered himself and that it was of his fullness that he was emptied? And how too could one doubt that it was from his former, innate state of freedom that he came down in the form of a servant? I say, therefore, that the heifer indicates that which is in subjection and under the governance of the law.

The heifer was red because the manner of the divine economy involved Christ shedding his blood on our account and for our sakes. And the heifer was without blemish, for Christ knew no sin. And it was unaccustomed to labor and to the yoke because of the freedom Christ possessed in his deity and because servitude was unknown to him, even though he became one of us and came in the form of a servant.

It says, "*The heifer shall be given to Eleazar the priest, and it shall be taken outside the camp to a clean place, and it shall be slain before him.*" The priest was a figure of those who are holy and sanctified, and who have been anointed with the Holy Spirit, since it

134. Var. "limitation."

is said through the holy man to us who believe: "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation."¹³⁵ To us holy ones then, who are a chosen race and a holy nation, Christ has been given as our sanctification and redemption, as our wisdom and righteousness from God the Father,¹³⁶ as our Savior and Redeemer, the one who, as the divine Paul writes, "suffered outside the gate."¹³⁷ He further said that we should go there, bearing his reproach, that is, our own cross. The Savior himself also said the same thing: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me."¹³⁸

Now the law, in prescribing that the heifer should be slaughtered in the sight of the priest, signified that it is most proper and profitable for those who are holy and sanctified to have the Christ, him who died, in the view, as it were, of their eyes. And when we are mindful of the Christ who died on our account and for our sakes, it is then that we are greatly amazed at what the divine Paul declares to us concerning him: "For one died for all, so that those who live might no longer live for themselves, but for him who died for us and was raised again."¹³⁹ And again he said, "For I through the law died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. The life that I live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for us."¹⁴⁰ Therefore, let the sacrificial death that he endured for us be set somehow before the eyes of our hearts. And thus we will no longer live for ourselves, but rather for God, as those who have been purchased by the blood of Christ, who gave himself for us, in accordance with [632] the Scriptures.

It further prescribed that by the hand of the priest the holy tabernacle was to be sprinkled with blood seven times, and that the heifer should be burned to ashes, and no part of the whole

135. 1 Pt 2.9.

136. Cf. 1 Cor 1.30.

137. Heb 13.12.

138. Mt 16.24; cf. Mk 8.34; Lk 9.23.

139. 2 Cor 5.14-15.

140. Gal 2.19-20.

was to be omitted, but it should be burned with its flesh, its dung, its skin, and the remaining parts of the body. For Christ sanctifies the true tabernacle, which is the church, with his own blood, and he sanctifies it copiously and totally. For this, I believe, is what is meant by the tabernacle being sprinkled with blood seven times, the number seven being symbolic of totality.

The burning of the heifer to ashes after its slaughter appears to indicate the acceptance of the death which Christ underwent for us. For silver is approved by being tested in fire, as is recited in the Psalms: "You have tested us, O God; you have tried us as silver is tried in the fire."¹⁴¹ That Christ was approved through his being obedient to the point of death is very plainly depicted here, it seems to me. For through Zechariah the prophet, who we may suppose is addressing those justified by faith, namely those for whom Christ died, it said, "And I will say to them, 'If it is agreeable to you, weigh out and give me my wages, or refuse to do so.'" Then the prophet said, "So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said to me, 'Throw it into the furnace and see if it is approved, as I was approved for their sakes.'"¹⁴² Surely then, as I said, the burning of the heifer to ashes after it was slain signifies that Christ was tested to the point of death and was approved.

None of the heifer was cast aside, however, for the whole of Christ is holy, the flesh and the skin, that is to say, the parts that are covered over and hidden, and those that are visible and external. For he was by nature God, although he became one of us, apart from the fact that he knew no sin.

Cedar wood, as well as hyssop and a scarlet thread, were thrown into the embers. The cedar nicely indicates to us incorruptibility, for cedar wood does not undergo decay. The hyssop denotes cleansing, for this plant is a purgative that naturally dissolves impurities in the bowels. The scarlet thread especially well signifies the Word becoming joined to flesh, for the Word was formed of flesh and blood, and on our account he was tried as through fire and to the point of death, as I said just now. Yet his suffering and the mode of his human existence procured

¹⁴¹ Ps 66.10 (65.10 LXX).

¹⁴² Zec 11.12–13.

incorruption and purification for us. For in him we have been justified in our souls and inward parts¹⁴³ and have rid ourselves of pollution, since baptism truly brings salvation and the imparting of power, not as the removal of filth from the body, but as the appeal to God of a good conscience,¹⁴⁴ and through it there comes the forgiveness of sins, the grace that assuredly follows the confession of faith. So then, that Christ died for us and became the way to incorruption and life, can in no way be doubted.

Now the man who burnt the heifer and mixed the ashes with the cedar wood, the [633] hyssop, and the piece of scarlet, and also the man who gathered up the ashes, were unclean, it says, until evening, even though they washed their clothes and were washed clean themselves. The law was perhaps demonstrating here the weakness of human nature, and that if our actions were to be examined carefully in detail, nobody would be completely above reproach with regard to what had been commanded to be performed, namely the divine and sacred ministry. Even if someone wished to live in a more excellent way and was as pure as was possible, he would still not have a ministry that was without fault. For no one is worthy to take up the mysteries of our Savior. And no wonder, for the sacred word persuades us that "the stars are not pure before him."¹⁴⁵ Surely then, if our actions were compared to the purity of Christ, they would be impure and defiled, and subject to divine punishment. Also, one might reasonably be amazed when the divine singer says, "If you should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? For with you there is forgiveness."¹⁴⁶ Therefore, the person who thinks himself pure is rebuked. For as I said, much better than the condition of human nature is to attain to complete sinlessness and to have purity within us¹⁴⁷ through our association with Christ.

143. Lit. "bowels."

144. Cf. 1 Pt 3.21.

145. Jb 25.5.

146. Ps 130.3-4 (129.3-4 LXX). The Harleian MS omits the last sentence of the citation.

147. Var. "to have a purity exceeding that which is in us."

It says that the water of purification should be poured out outside the camp, and not within the camp itself, since purification in Christ is to be found outside, as it were, the congregation of the Jews. For he utterly abandoned it, saying, "Behold, your house is left to you desolate."¹⁴⁸ So the purifying grace then flowed, so to speak, to the Gentiles, and, as Paul says, "Those who were far off have been brought near."¹⁴⁹ For they were called through faith and have been richly blessed with the righteousness found in Christ, while the people of Israel chose to disbelieve.

The law made it clear that the water of purification could readily wash away every form of impurity when it said that if anyone touched a dead body he would be defiled, but he could be released from what had come upon him only if he were sprinkled with the water of purification on the third and the seventh day. Indeed the deadness, the corruption of bodies, was symbolic of impurity. And the water of sprinkling that was mixed with the ashes of the heifer and other things was a figure of holy baptism.

Accordingly, the person who is caught up in dead works and in defiling acts that lead to corruption (and we say that the dead works of the flesh are godless and profane desires, sexual immorality, impurity, passion, and evil lust) has no other way of being cleansed unless he is purified and washes away the defilement through holy baptism with respect to the third and the seventh day. And the third day signifies the time of the resurrection, the last period of time, that of fulfillment, in which the Only-Begotten became man.

Now it further says that if a house became defiled because someone had died in it, those who entered the house would be unclean. Also, every vessel and container that was not covered over would be in a defiled condition unless these too were cleansed in the same way by the water of purification on the third and on the [636] seventh day. In these matters regarding the house that was defiled, along with the vessels and uncovered containers in it, the Lawgiver seems to be indicating to

¹⁴⁸. Mt 23.38.

¹⁴⁹. Cf. Eph 2.13.

us the killing of the Lord by the congregation of the Jews. It is this congregation as a whole that is understood spiritually by the house, and the individuals in it are understood by all the vessels, as man is a vessel upon the earth. That the Jews did not have a sound mind, but one that was greatly disposed to defilement and open to all kinds of inclinations to act wickedly, is in some way hinted at by the vessels that were not covered, into which it was easy for anything to drop, whether a gecko or some other creature found in houses. But those who have been justified by faith do not have this kind of mind. For their mind is secure and covered over, and it is not easy for inclinations towards acting wickedly to gain access to it.

It says that even *"if anyone happened to touch the body of someone slain, the bone of a dead person, or a grave, he would be defiled."*¹⁵⁰ And we say that *"someone slain"* is one who has an unhealthy heart, being as though he were slain, either by worldly lusts, or by pleasures of this world and of the flesh. We take *"the bone of a dead person"* to be the remains of impurity, and *"a grave"* as a kind of reminder of the impurity that causes death. For there are times when Satan strikes the heart. And although we are defeated to some degree by carnal passions and we ourselves are weakened, it is not with regard to sin in its total extent. So we continue to live in the world still having the condition in which there are the remnants of sin. It is as if to say that there is someone who is quick to lose his temper or is overcome by the love of money, and he cannot always avoid such excesses.¹⁵¹ This shows, I believe, that a certain amount of impurity remains, of which the bone of a dead person was a symbol. But even though our passion has now been conquered, when we let our minds lapse into forgetfulness, and we pass near some hidden pleasure, we sometimes commit sin in no small measure.

We have, however, been delivered from such charges, since Christ has washed us clean and purified us through his suffering. For he died for us, and by his wounds we have been healed.¹⁵² He himself took away our sins and is our advocate

150. Nm 19.16.

151. Var. "he cannot avoid the expression of his passions."

152. Cf. Is 53.5; 1 Pt 2.24.

with the Father for our sins, “and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world,” as the divine John wrote.¹⁵³ Therefore, there is total cleansing, a total justification, sanctification, and redemption in Christ. With him and through him be glory to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever.¹⁵⁴ Amen.

Concerning the bronze serpent

1. “God did not create death, nor does he delight in the destruction of living creatures,” according to what is written.¹⁵⁵ For he created everything to have being and the generations of the world to be preserved. But as the first person of our race, Adam, was plagued by disobedience and ignored the divine command, he offended God the Maker, and so fell into corruption. Human nature came under a curse, and the race was subject to punishment. And we wretches, even though we were made in incorruption, after we have barely flourished like shadows and like the grass of the field for a short season, we descend ingloriously back to the earth, our mother.

At this the saints have in various ways cried out, lamenting the condition that we are in. Thus one can plainly hear the blessed David as he cries, “Man is like nothingness.”¹⁵⁶ Likewise Isaiah said, “All flesh is like grass, and all [637] the glory of man is like the flower of grass.”¹⁵⁷ For we have now come, as I said, to this state of wretchedness and degradation, so that even wise men under the inspiration of the Spirit are not able to speak of anything to which our condition could reasonably be compared.

Yet the Maker did not ignore those who were affected in this way, but rather he thought them worthy of his consideration, and rendered them free in Christ from death and corruption.

153. Cf. 1 Jn 2.1–2.

154. Var. omit “for ever and ever.”

155. Wis 1.13.

156. Ps 144.4 (143.4 LXX). Before this text the Harleian Codex adds another psalm citation from 49.12 (48.13 LXX): “Man, despite his honor, does not understand.”

157. Is 40.6.

How was this so? It is in fact evident to all, even if one cannot perhaps say how. And it is the case that one may also perceive the import¹⁵⁸ of this mystery in the older Scriptures.

Now in Numbers it reads as follows: *Departing from Mount Hor by the way leading to the Red Sea, they went around the land of Edom. Then the people became disheartened on the journey, and they spoke against God and against Moses, saying, "Why have you brought us out of Egypt to kill us in the desert? For there is no food or water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread." So the Lord sent deadly snakes among the people, and they bit them, and many of the people of Israel died. Then the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, because we spoke against the Lord and against you. So pray to the Lord that he take away the snakes from among us." Moses prayed for the people, and the Lord said to him, "Make a serpent and set it up on a pole."¹⁵⁹ And if a snake bites a person, everyone that is bitten who looks at it will live." So Moses made a bronze serpent, and set it up on a pole. And it happened that when a serpent bit a person, and he looked at the bronze serpent, then he lived.¹⁶⁰*

The people had labored in Egypt, and when they were burdened with unbearable servitude, they were redeemed by God, and many wonderful signs were done there. The water was turned into blood, and frogs and gnats, as well as flies and the downpour of hail, almost ruined the land of the Egyptians. But they were further punished with the sending of darkness, and those who chose to oppress others were grievously afflicted with the death of the firstborn when God wonderfully saved the people of Israel. Then, when they were passing through the midst of the sea upon dry land, they saw the Egyptians suffer an abject destruction. They received bread from heaven, for God sent down the manna for them. It is also said that Christ is to be understood as the rock, and that he showed mercy beyond expectation in providing those who were thirsty with flowing water.

For the Deity is all-powerful, and he ungrudgingly bestows the necessities of life upon those who depend on him. Those

158. Or "power," "force."

159. Or "standard."

160. Nm 21.4-9.

who enjoy such excellent gifts, however, are tested with a few arduous trials. Also, because some are forgetful of what things there are that come from God, and have not the least ability to put their faith in him, but are reckless,¹⁶¹ easily shaken, and prone to timidity of spirit, they are remarkably ignorant of the gifts from God which they have been granted. For the people called the bread from heaven "*worthless*," and complained about the lack of water, even though they had learned¹⁶² that nothing was impossible for the divine and ineffable Being, and that he had appointed a rock of flint for them as a source of running streams.

So when [640] they made bold accusations against God, they were punished by the bites of the snakes. Then when they came to be mindful of their sins, they shed tears and confessed their offenses. They besought the mediator, Moses, that God should be compassionate and gentle with them. So Moses fell prostrate and made entreaty. Then in obedience to the commands from heaven, he made a bronze serpent, and set it up high. He instructed those who had been stricken to look upon it, and in doing this they were saved.

2. There now follows a careful examination of what the text is about, and wherein the great and wise mystery lies. For it is not the literal sense that satisfies those who are more discerning, but the mysteries that are found in the figures. So we shall now speak of the matter, transforming the narrative once again from the figure to its more general principle and to that which is the real truth.

The fact is that we are displeased with the good gifts that come from God above, and we seek heedlessly after pleasure to a degree that is not profitable. We set aside the exercise of virtue, and incline ourselves rather to what is shameful. In doing this we have grieved our Benefactor, and in more than one way we have given offense to our Maker. Consequently, we have fallen prey to the bites of the snakes, spiritual snakes that is, which strike us by means of every kind of sin, bringing us down into the bonds of death. And that rebellious serpent, Satan, leads

161. Var. "unsound."

162. Var. add "by experience."

a multitude of venomous beasts, as it were, and in the beginning the first man, Adam, perished by his bites. And so evil, as though coming forth from a root, crept up on us also who have been born out of the root. Yet we have been saved in a particular manner, for we have¹⁶³ beheld the serpent, which is Christ. So how is it that the God who is good by nature, or rather who is goodness itself, should be a serpent? It is because he became one of us, who are evil by disposition, for he came "in the likeness of sinful flesh,"¹⁶⁴ and "he was counted with the transgressors."¹⁶⁵ And that we are evil—though we were not made so by God, but rather we fell headlong into this state of vileness because of sin's tyrannical dominion over us—Christ himself also makes clear when he says, "If you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him?"¹⁶⁶

Therefore, Christ, who had the likeness of evil, is a serpent because he became a man. But if one should view him from a spiritual perspective, he would be seen as one who is above corruption, surmounting death, considering its bite as nothing, and giving no thought to the strength of its venom. So we shall look upon Christ, if we understand the mystery regarding him correctly. And we firmly believe that although he is God by nature, he became man, and yet while he came in the likeness of evil, his goodness was not in the least bit diminished. For he became one of us, not so that he might be seen as one who is evil along with us, but that he might make us good, transforming us by the Holy Spirit so that we might attain every form of virtue.

Moreover, the serpent was raised up on a pole, as Christ was lifted up on the precious cross, and he himself declared this to the Jews, saying, "When you lift up the Son of Man then you will know that [641] I am he."¹⁶⁷ We ascertain that the serpent was a figure that looked to the mystery of Christ since he ex-

163. Var. "we ourselves have also."

164. Rom 8.3.

165. Is 53.12; Lk 22.37.

166. Mt 7.11.

167. Jn 8.28.

pressly said to inquirers, "For as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up." And the serpent was bronze, because it represented the pleasing and melodious sound of the divine proclamation of the gospel.¹⁶⁸ For there is no one who has not heard the oracles given through Christ, but they have gone into all the world, and the mystery regarding him is spoken about. To him every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess¹⁶⁹ that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.¹⁷⁰ Amen.

168. Bronze would appear to have been associated with certain musical instruments, such as cymbals and gongs (cf. 1 Chr 15.19; 1 Cor 13.1).

169. Var. add "to God."

170. Cf. Phil 2.10–11.

BOOK THIRTEEN: DEUTERONOMY

Concerning [644] the slaughter¹ of the heifer in the valley

AT MANY TIMES and in many ways God spoke long ago to the fathers by the prophets,² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the world.”³ Although the Son is by nature God, he came down and emptied himself, for he became flesh and dwelt among us, according to the Scriptures.⁴ Those who truly understand this are enriched through the precious divine grace, “For as many as received him,” it says, “he gave them the right to become children of God.”⁵

But those who do indeed reject the divine and saving word have lost all hope, for those who are evil perish in an evil manner, since they profanely insult the Savior and Redeemer of all. Such were the wretched Jews over whom the prophet Jeremiah made lamentation, saying, “Who will give water to my head,⁶ and a fountain of tears to my eyes, so that I might weep for this people day and night?”⁷ For those who are capable of being illustrious and worthy of emulation, how can people devoid of any innate goodness not reasonably be reckoned as being

1. Lit. “hamstringing” (see n. 10 below).

2. Var. “long ago to the prophets.”

3. Heb 1.1–2.

4. Jn 1.14.

5. Jn 1.12.

6. The LXX here gives a very literal translation of a Hebrew idiom having the sense of “O that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears.”

7. Jer 9.1 (8.23 LXX).

just the same as those who are now dead? For these people the prophet suitably lamented and shed tears out of love and affection. Surely, then, they became desolate of all good, and unruly Israel was shaken off its very foundations. For Christ passed over to the Gentiles, and a small portion of the dull-witted Jews has barely been preserved from that time on. And this, I believe, is what was uttered⁸ prophetically through Isaiah [645] when he said, "Unless the Lord of hosts had left us a seed, we would have become like Sodom, and we would have become the same as Gomorrah."⁹

So come now, if it seems good to do so, and let us examine the import of the mystery from the words of the Mosaic writings. For this is what was written in Deuteronomy: *"If someone is found slain in the land which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, fallen in the field, and it is not known who struck him down, then your elders and your judges shall go out and measure the distance to the towns around the slain man. And the elders of the town that is nearest to the body shall take a heifer from the herd, which has not labored and which has not pulled with a yoke. The elders of that town shall bring the heifer down to a rough valley, which has not been cultivated nor sown, and they shall slaughter¹⁰ the heifer in the valley. Then the priests and the Levites shall come, for the Lord your God has chosen them to stand before him and to pronounce blessings in his name, and by their word every dispute and every assault¹¹ shall be settled. And all the elders of that town who come near to the slain man shall wash their hands over the head of the heifer that was slaughtered in the valley. Then they shall respond and say, 'Our hands did not shed this blood, nor did our eyes see it happen. Be gracious to your people Israel, O Lord, whom you redeemed from the land of Egypt, that innocent blood may not be laid upon your people Israel, and that atonement shall be provided on their behalf for the shed blood.'* So you shall remove

8. Lit. "sung."

9. Is 1.9.

10. Lit. "hamstring," as in the *Glaphyra* on Genesis, Fathers of the Church 137, p. 324 n. 46.

11. The noun *aphê* literally means "touch." The Latin translator in Migne understood this as "leprosy." In this he departed from the Vulgate text, which took the reference to be to the determination of clean and unclean.

the guilt of innocent blood from your midst if you do what is good and pleasing before the Lord your God."¹²

2. Now Emmanuel was slain for us, for "he was bruised for our iniquities," in accordance with the Scriptures.¹³ He was seen to undergo this suffering in the land of the Jews, outside the gate of Jerusalem. Yet they did not know who it was that smote him, nor in what manner. So what does the law have to say about this?

We can indeed say that the audacious exploits of the Jews against Christ were an act of profanity on their part. For they brought him to Pilate, and they were to be found crying out, "Away with him, away with him! Crucify him!"¹⁴ and also, "If you do not kill this man, you are not a friend of Caesar."¹⁵ The divine disciples openly spoke out against the evil intentions¹⁶ of these people to God the Father in heaven, saying, "For truly both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, gathered together in this city against your holy servant Jesus Christ, whom you anointed."¹⁷ And the blessed Peter most clearly and distinctly rebuked the Jewish people, saying on one occasion, "You killed the Author of life,"¹⁸ and on another, "You disowned the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be given to you."¹⁹

Why, then, does the law say that they did not know who it was that struck the person? The meaning of the words is mystical and is not accessible to all in a simple manner, but it is readily intelligible only to those who truly understand the mystery of Christ. For the leaders of the Jews, [648] and those who joined in their ungodly scheming, supposed that they were in control, attributing the matter to their own evil designs, with Christ as an unwilling victim. They rejoiced as if they had in fact prevailed, not realizing that he suffered willingly and gave himself

12. Dt 21.1-9.

13. Is 53.5.

14. Jn 19.15.

15. Cf. Jn 19.12.

16. Var. "the unbelief."

17. Acts 4.27.

18. Acts 3.15.

19. Acts 3.14.

for us in obedience to the commands of the Father. Thus to Pilate he plainly said, "You would have no authority over me unless it had been given you from above."²⁰

Therefore, it is the Father that gave the Son and, if we may say so, he himself is said to have slain Emmanuel. And so in the book of Psalms the person of Christ is presented as speaking about the wickedness of the Jews to God the Father in heaven, saying, "They have persecuted the one you yourself have struck down, and they have added to the pain of my wounds."²¹ So their act of murdering the Lord should not be thought of too greatly, for they did not exercise power of themselves, as though Christ were helpless, but let them learn the truth of the matter spoken through Moses, for they did not know the one who had struck him.

We see, then, that the one slain in the land of the Jews was Emmanuel. But the mystery concerning him certainly did not find its fulfillment among the Jews, but was rather administered in the region and land of the Gentiles. For it says that when the person who had been slain was found, they should take a heifer that had no experience of the yoke or of labor. And taking it down into a rough and uncultivated²² valley, it should be slaughtered²³ by those appointed for ministry. Then, having washed their hands over the heifer, they²⁴ said, "*Our hands did not shed this blood.*"

The heifer, then, is a figure of Christ, as we said before. He is a heifer in that while he had no experience of the yoke, as a man he was under the yoke, but at the same time was free from the yoke on account of his being by nature God. For the Deity is free and is under the yoke of nothing that exists. Rather, he rules over all and holds the entire creation in his hands. So although the Son was free, being by nature God, he became a man alongside us and was under the yoke, since we ourselves have been placed under the yoke of the authority of the God-

20. Jn 19.11.

21. Ps 69.27 (68.27 LXX).

22. Var. omit "and uncultivated."

23. Lit. "hamstrung."

24. That is, the elders of the nearest town (Dt 21.6-7).

head. This is why he called God "Father" as we do. So then, he is a heifer insofar as he is under the yoke with respect to his human nature, yet he is free from the yoke because of his divine glory and absolute freedom.

Now note that the heifer was brought to a rough and uncultivated valley. For after that precious crucifixion, when Christ was seen to be slain, he left the land of the Jews, and removed himself from then on to the region of the Gentiles, which was neither worked nor sown. For before Christ shone forth upon the nations, he was in a world that was like a dry and uncultivated land, devoid of fruitfulness with respect to God. And so the prophet Isaiah says about this land, "Rejoice, O desert, with its villages. Let the wilderness be glad, and may it blossom forth like the lily."²⁵ So then, the countries of the Gentiles, the whole multitude of them, are well compared to a rough land that has not been worked upon and is completely without fruit.

In the valley the heifer had to be slaughtered by the sacred ministers. For, as I said, the work of the mystery of Christ is carried out by us for the people [649] of the Gentiles. As we declare his suffering and his return to life from the dead, so we admit them into the blessed mysteries. This, I believe, is the significance of the slaying²⁶ of the heifer. For in proclaiming his death and his resurrection, as I said, we are performing²⁷ that noble mystery.

Some of the Jews, however, may forsake their ungodliness and leave that distant city in which Christ was slain and was seen to have suffered; and coming to the rough and uncultivated valley, there they will wash their hands over Christ himself. For those who are baptized into his death are washed. This, I believe, is the significance of "*They shall wash their hands over it.*" Confessing that they were complicit in the wickedness of the Jews, they will obtain forgiveness. For when the Jews raged against Christ, they inscribed the condemnation for their impiety upon their own heads, saying, "His blood be upon us and upon our children."²⁸ But these others were desirous to receive

25. Cf. Is 35.1; 42.11.

26. Lit. "hamstringing."

27. Or "fulfilling."

28. Mt 27.25.

grace from him, and sought to be cleansed through the Holy Spirit. And so by means of matters that they had learned to revere, it is as if they had cried out, "*Our hands did not shed this blood.*"

There is therefore cleansing in Christ, even for any of the Jews who cared to come to their right minds, something which the divinely inspired disciples, as well as those who came to believe through them, did before all others. Here in the law it is the role of the body of elders that is very appropriately assumed by the disciples, for they were men who were especially chosen and honorable, making entreaty for the wickedness of Israel through faith in Christ, through whom and with whom be glory to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

*Concerning the captive woman whose hair was
shorn and whose nails were cut*

1. The God of all delivered the people of the race of Israel out of a house of bondage, as though out of an iron furnace, having made war, in effect, against the Egyptians with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, as it is written,²⁹ arraying his miracles against the raging of those oppressing them. For he performed signs and wonders, and commanded the people to go through the midst of the sea as though on dry land. Also, as the divine David said, "He sustained them in the wilderness, and he gave them bread from heaven; men ate the bread of angels. He opened up springs of water."³⁰ For what great wonders did he not do that far exceeded all expectation? Therefore, the divine Moses wrote, "As an eagle would watch over its brood, he took them, and carried them on his back."³¹

Yet the people descended into such evil intent, such depraved reasonings, and such wild undertakings, that they even rejected³² the Redeemer himself when he was present in the

29. Cf. Ex 13.3; 14.25; 18.9; Dt 4.20; Ps 136.12 (135.12 LXX), etc.

30. Cf. Ps 78.24-25 (77.24-25 LXX); 114.8 (113.8 LXX).

31. Dt 32.11 (abbreviated).

32. Var. "dishonored."

flesh. And why do I speak of this but omit other atrocities? It is because they killed him with a fierce and unrestrained audacity, being driven to commit the most extreme wickedness. Because of this the Jerusalem that murdered the Lord was justly sent away, so showing it to be void of a relationship with God. It was removed to a state in which it suffered every manner of calamity, receiving the self-induced punishment upon its own head, as it were. Emmanuel [652] himself also declared, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often have I desired to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Behold, your house is left to you desolate."³³

That the synagogue of the Jews, which acted hatefully towards Christ, would undergo a terrible and unbearable punishment even the law itself represents to us by means of a figure. For it reads as follows: *"If you go out to war against your enemies, and the Lord your God delivers them into your hands, and you take their spoil, and you see among the captives a young woman who is beautiful in appearance, and you desire her and take her as your wife and bring her into your house, then you shall shave her head and cut her nails; and you shall remove the garments of her captivity from upon her, and she shall remain in your house, and she shall mourn for her father and mother for a month. After that you may go into her and live with her, and she shall be your wife. And if you are not pleased with her, then you shall set her free, but she shall not be sold for money; you shall not treat her contemptuously, because you have humbled her."*³⁴

I do not think there is any point in analyzing the literal sense of the text, nor in exercising our skill in an examination of those matters whose nature it is to serve as shadows. For there is nothing difficult in the literal sense. The text is very straightforward, and with some effort one can attain an understanding of what is prescribed here. Therefore, our inquiry shall be made into spiritual meanings.

2. Now what is this war that took place, and how is it to be interpreted? Who is the woman that has a beautiful appearance and such comeliness? And what does it mean to cut all the

33. Mt 23.37-38.

34. Dt 21.10-14.

hair off her head, to remove her nails, and the garments of captivity?

So, as I have mentioned before, the synagogue of the Jews labored as captives for the Egyptians. The fathers went down to Egypt in the first place when a famine came upon the land. But after a long time had passed, they became strong and courageous, and increased in number. The Egyptians were afraid that, being emboldened by their numbers, the people of Israel should fight against them, and so they would fall under the power of those they had previously overcome. Thereupon, Israel was afflicted in no small measure with the task of making bricks.

God, however, was merciful. For, as I said, he fought against the people³⁵ of the Egyptians, who were intolerably oppressive; he was victorious and brought them to naught. Among the spoils taken in the battle³⁶ he saw Jerusalem, namely the multitude of the Jews, which was radiant with the beauty of her patriarchal nobility, for she was beautiful and most attractive on account of the fathers. When he saw her, he desired her, that is to say, he deemed her worthy of his love. Wishing to live together with her, as it were, and to make her a mother of good deeds, he brought her into his own house. And what does this mean? He set up the holy tabernacle in the desert so that, being instructed by the sacrifices offered according to the law, and by the divine ministrations carried out by way of types, she might soon come to know the mystery of Christ. [653] For the law was a tutor with regard to Christ, as the blessed Paul said.³⁷ So bringing her to his house, he shaved off her hair, removed her nails and the clothes of captivity.

Now as for the head, sacred Scripture has the custom of interpreting it as the mind, and it likens the hair upon it to thoughts of the mind. So the shaving of the hair indicates especially well the removal of certain ideas, something that ancient

35. Following the reading of the Harleian Codex (*dêmois*), instead of "bonds" (*desmois*).

36. The word here (*dorulépton*) is a unique coinage on the part of Cyril. Its etymology suggests someone or something "taken by the spear."

37. Gal 3.24.

Israel was commanded to perform when they were redeemed, as God clearly said through the all-wise Moses, "You shall have no other gods besides me,"³⁸ and also, "You shall not behave thus toward the Lord your God. For the abominations that the Lord hates they have performed for their gods."³⁹ For when they were living in Egypt, they had thoughts of a different kind, supposing there to be an innumerable number of gods. They held the creation in reverence above the Creator,⁴⁰ ascribing glory to objects of wood and stone. But when through Moses they were called to a knowledge of him who was by nature the only true God, how can it be doubted that at that time they were introduced to other thoughts that were utterly new to them? The divine Paul commanded that we too should take pains to do the same, saying, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God."⁴¹ The shaving of the head, then, surely represents this fact.

The removal of long nails speaks figuratively of the putting off of filth and uncleanness, for I do not know how those who like to have nails much longer than necessary can keep them free of dirt. It cannot be doubted that it was necessary for Israel, in being made worthy of a relationship with God, to depart from its former uncleanness,⁴² as the law clearly declares: "You shall not murder"; "You shall not commit adultery"; "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor";⁴³ and the other commandments alongside these.

As for the garments of captivity, I would say they represent servitude, and also depict figuratively a base way of life. For being subject to the desires of the devil and submitting her neck to his oppression, Israel accepted that torn and filthy garment, which is the love of the flesh. Then when she was redeemed and placed under the law, she was instructed how to think and

38. Ex 20.3; Dt 5.7.

39. Dt 12.31.

40. Var. "the one who created it."

41. Rom 12.2.

42. The words "from its former uncleanness" have been added from the Harleian Codex.

43. Ex 20.13-14, 16; Dt 5.17-18, 20.

do better things, and she removed from herself the former baseness with which she was charged, and lived under the instruction given through the law as though she had put on a splendid robe. And this, I believe, is what the divine Paul also urges us ourselves to do when he says, "You have put off the old man with its practices, and have put on the new, which is being renewed in the image of him who created it."⁴⁴ In holy baptism we strip off, as it were, the garments of captivity and throw them to Satan. And then, putting on Emmanuel, we give thanks to God the Father,⁴⁵ saying, "May my soul rejoice in the Lord, for he has clothed me with the garment of salvation, and the robe of rejoicing."⁴⁶ Paul [656], being one who gave commandments,⁴⁷ also said, "Clothe yourselves with our Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its lusts."⁴⁸ Note how, having put off the things of the flesh, like the garments of captivity, we are provided with a radiant and divine robe, which is Christ. For it is he who is "the robe of rejoicing" and "the garment of salvation."

So having had her hair cut off, and her long and dirty nails removed, and the garments of captivity taken away, it says that only then could the woman live in the house and reside there as a married woman. Yet she should mourn her father and mother for a month; that is, she should have remembrance of her own family. And after that the man could go into her, and she would be his wife.

I think it necessary that those who have been called into a relationship with God, I mean those set free from wicked thoughts, from vain reasonings that lead to sin,⁴⁹ and from all pollution of mind, that is, "the old man"⁵⁰ which is corrupted by its deceitful⁵¹ lusts," as the divine Paul writes,⁵² should un-

44. Col 3.10.

45. Var. omit "to God the Father."

46. Is 61.10.

47. Lit. "being a lawgiver."

48. Rom 13.14.

49. Var. "which lead one to go astray."

50. Var. "Put off the old man."

51. Var. "fleshly."

52. Eph 4.22.

dividedly attend upon⁵³ the one who has preserved⁵⁴ them, the God who has received them into a familial⁵⁵ relationship. For to stay in the house, it seems to me, indicates the act of attending upon without distraction. And so the blessed David, knowing that which is most excellent and profitable, says, "One thing I asked from the Lord, this I will seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to look upon his holy temple."⁵⁶ It would be an especially clear indication that one's mind is fixed upon God and filled with love for him, if one thought that he should continually tarry in the divine courts in such a way as this. The Maker, however, is not ignorant of the extent of man's thoughts. How could it be so? For he is in fact the one who says, "He knows our frame."⁵⁷ Now when we remove ourselves from life in the world and set aside the mind given over to carnal passions, it will not be our practice to do all this without resisting. At first we act weakly, and our mind is still drawn to base things through various pleasures. It easily slips into a remembrance of the distractions that are in the world, and very much welcomes,⁵⁸ as it were, a relationship with it, even though the law might perhaps restrain it, and God may draw us back to a more excellent life, leading us into one that is incomparably better. For as virtue is an uphill journey, while the path that takes us to what is depraved is very flat, so we refuse that which requires much effort and readily go along the other.

What does the law then state? "*She shall mourn for her father and mother for a month*"; that is, she should not immediately be received into the man's home to live there, but should spend a short time in remembrance of her own family. It happens to those who are taken captive that even though they might perhaps be treated respectfully by their masters, and even though they may be allowed to live in abundant luxury, yet they still

53. Or "serve."

54. Var. "honored."

55. Var. "spiritual."

56. Ps 27.4 (26.4 LXX).

57. Ps 103.14 (102.14).

58. Var. add "gladly."

long for their town, their home, and their family [657], and they can do nothing other than hold them in remembrance. At times they shed tears, and their mind is filled with sorrow and distress, because they have been separated from their own home.

Such a circumstance was experienced by the congregation of Israel. For they were redeemed out of Egypt and brought out from bitter slavery, and they were called by God to an abundant freedom as was enjoyed by their forefathers. But they also remembered life in Egypt, and they cried out, saying, "Would that we had been struck down by the Lord and died in the land of Egypt."⁵⁹ They also berated Moses, saying, "Why did you bring us out into this desert?"⁶⁰ So while it was necessary that they be delivered from the accursed love of the flesh and from life in the world, it was at first hard to tear themselves away from such, and they sometimes sought after worldly things. This is what is implied when the Lawgiver says, "*She shall mourn for her father and mother for a month.*"

For sure we are not saying that they were ordered to mourn, but rather that they were given the opportunity to do so, and this expression of their weakness was tolerated. And it said that the offenses of those who had gone through this experience should be permitted,⁶¹ because they had not yet acquired endurance. And so God allowed for the passion expressed by the congregation of the Jews in the desert, and he did not completely destroy those who had sinned, though he was rightfully indignant. But that he would not always make allowances for our infirmity and permit us to have remembrance of our previous relationship, namely that with the world, he plainly showed when he assigned a time to mourn that was not lengthy, this being a month, that is, a short and limited period of time. Such an understanding is presented to us by the divine singer, when he said to the church of the Gentiles, "Hear, O daughter, consider and incline your ear; forget your own people and your father's house, because the king has desired your beauty."⁶²

59. Ex 16.3.

60. Nm 21.5; cf. Ex 14.11.

61. Or "forgiven."

62. Ps 45.11 (44.12 LXX).

Once she has mourned her father and mother for a month, it says that she shall be the man's wife. For, being freed, as I said, from the life of the world, it is then that we are joined to God, in a spiritual union that is. For "whoever joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with him."⁶³

Yet it says, "*If you are not pleased with her, then you shall set her free, but she shall not be sold for money.*" For when the synagogue of the Jews acted profanely, and laid hands upon Christ himself, because she behaved badly towards her Master, she became unloved and unwanted, and was sent away from the divine and sacred home, as it were. She was not, however, delivered into slavery, nor was it as though she had been sold to Satan and wholly made subject to his desires. For even though Israel had fallen away from her relationship with Christ, yet she did not worship idols. But she continued to confess and worship him who is by nature the one God, and maintained her love of Moses and the law, for the God of all did not despise her, because she had once been considered worthy of a relationship with him. He teaches us this when he says, "*You shall not treat her contemptuously, because you have humbled her.*" Here the humbling means the deflowering of the woman, which points to a union of a spiritual nature, namely that which is in Christ, through whom and with whom be glory to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

Concerning war against the enemies

"Take up your weapons and shields," proclaimed [660] Isaiah the prophet.⁶⁴ The most-wise Paul also said, "Put on the whole armor of God."⁶⁵ For those who are friends of God and lovers of virtue, and who are nurtured together on all that is excellent, it is very much their habit to make war against every profane and carnal pleasure. Being firm in their faith, immovable in their endurance, patient in labor, and eager to perform the most admirable deeds, they assault the evil dispositions of

63. 1 Cor 6.17.

64. Jer 46.3 (26.3 LXX). Cyril incorrectly attributes this text to Isaiah.

65. Eph 6.11.

the devil. I do believe, however, that in this engagement nobody may attain to the full measure of spiritual strength, so as to obtain the most wonderful and all-transcending glory, unless he has Christ protecting him.⁶⁶ And he is most willing to stand together with and to fight alongside those who are attentive to his will, those who have been richly blessed by the cleansing that comes through him, and that consider the reproach he bore to be a matter of glory. And so the divine psalmist said, "He who dwells in the help of the Most High will abide under the shelter of the God of heaven. He will say to the Lord, 'You are my helper, and my refuge, my God, and my aid; I will hope in him. For he will deliver me from the hunter's snare and from all trouble.'" ⁶⁷ Since God preserves us, it is sure that we will get the better of our enemies, as the faithful one himself says, "Because he came to me," ⁶⁸ I will deliver him. He cried out to me, and I will hearken to him. I am with him in affliction; I will deliver him and honor him." ⁶⁹

Now note the matter that was recorded by the all-wise Moses. For he said, *"If you go out to make war against your enemies, then you shall keep yourself from every evil thing. If there is a man among you who becomes unclean by reason of a nocturnal emission, then he shall go outside the camp and shall not enter into it. When evening approaches, he shall wash his body in water; and when the sun has set, he may enter the camp. You shall have a place outside the camp where you shall go, and you shall have a tool upon your belt, and when you squat down outside, you shall dig a hole with it and cover over your waste with it. For the Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp to protect you and to deliver your enemy into your hands. So your camp shall be holy, and no shameful thing shall be seen in it, or he will turn away from you."* ⁷⁰

You should understand that those who wish to have victory over their enemies and to be honored must be rid of all defile-

66. Lit. "as his shield-bearer."

67. Ps 91.1-3 (90.1-3 LXX); cf. Ps 18.2 (17.3 LXX).

68. Var. "hoped in me" (as LXX).

69. Ps 91.14-15 (90.14-15 LXX).

70. Dt 23.9-14 (23.10-15 LXX).

ment. "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood,⁷¹ but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world, and against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places,"⁷² which closely watch the lives of men and examine each person's way of life. For our behavior must be rendered blameless and above reproach, so that it might not fall under the accusations of those powers. Also, the father of sin is both an enemy and an avenger.

So, when those [661] who are in this world raise themselves up against their enemies in the practice of warfare, they may perhaps receive blows against their bodies, or they may inflict them upon others. But it is not so with us. For our weapons are not of the flesh, as it is written.⁷³ Nor are we struck in the flesh, but we receive the attack of lusts upon the mind and heart, and suffer the passions of the love of the flesh. It is necessary, then, for us to be equipped with full spiritual armor, to be protected on all sides by heavenly grace, and as far as is possible to put our minds beyond the effects of every spiritual missile. In this way we shall have the advantage over our opponents, and, being superior to all passion, we shall preserve unscathed the beauty of our souls for God.

Now this is what the law says: *"If you go out to make war against your enemies, then you shall keep yourself from every evil thing,"* that is, distance yourself from all guilt; let there be no word spoken truly against you with regard to any shameful or blameworthy matter; keep yourself from condemnatory accusations, and let every evil word uttered against you be groundless. And that we must avoid charges of fleshly impurity is shown to us in figures by the command that the one who was defiled on account of his emission should go outside the camp and that he should be washed in water as evening approached, and so, if he wished, he might live back in his home once again, and in the camp.

What this matter is about, and what the interpretation of these things is, I will endeavor to explain.

Now if any human defilement occurs, when the mind has

71. Var. add "as it is written."

72. Eph 6.12.

73. 2 Cor 10.4.

for a moment been compelled to allow itself to be invaded by vile lusts, then in this regard it must be excluded from the multitude of the saints, which the Lord has deemed just, since he does not permit the pure to live alongside the impure. For in no way does he allow the corrupting sin within us to escape reproof. Yet we may obtain cleansing in Christ, and be purified by water, speaking with reference to the words: "Wash yourselves, be clean."⁷⁴

In doing this as evening drew near, that is, in the latter times of the world, one may see that this is fulfilled with respect to the congregation of the saints.⁷⁵ For those who were defiled by an extraordinary love of the flesh, who once remained outside the camp and congregation of the saints, who were far from the sacred assembly, when they were richly blessed through the cleansing⁷⁶ of holy baptism, then those who were far came near, and they were made companions of the saints,⁷⁷ and also fellow-citizens and partakers of the same hope. This happened at the time of the advent of Christ, which was as though it were in the evening, as it came towards the close of the present age. It must be said, then, that those who procure⁷⁸ the cleansing found in Christ rid themselves of all charges of loving the flesh.

It says, "*You shall have a place outside the camp where you shall go, and you shall have a tool upon your belt, and when you squat down outside, you shall dig a hole with it and cover over your waste with it. For the Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp to [664] protect you and to deliver your enemy into your hands. So your camp shall be holy, and no shameful thing shall be seen in it.*"

Now it is especially proper that those who wish to contend manfully against their spiritual enemies should shun every kind of impurity, as I said. For "we all stumble in many respects,"⁷⁹ and while the unstable nature of man suffers from an inclination to sin, yet "no one can understand his transgressions,"

74. Is 1.16.

75. Var. "of the Gentiles."

76. Var. "the grace."

77. Var. omit "they were made companions of the saints." Harleian only reads: "they are fellow-citizens and . . ."

78. Var. "choose."

79. Jas 3.2.

in accordance with what the psalmist says.⁸⁰ So, it says, if we should be overcome by one of the inherent impurities that are within us, and be found infected with any of those things that transgress the law and are contrary to a life of sanctity (since the law of sin dwells in the members of the flesh), then at first the failings originating in our infected condition should not be set forth openly or made visible to many, but, like the person who is put outside and remains unseen far from the camp, they should be concealed by undergoing correction. For “the wise will hide their shame,” as it is written.⁸¹

Then when we cease from our transgressions, and reconstitute our mind, as it were, through influences that lead to better things, so that we choose what is profitable for us, then we remove from within us the unseemliness of those former failings. And so, having overcome the malodorous sin by the subsequent pleasing aroma, we may again enter into the camp of the saints, that is, into the church of the firstborn.

And this too finds its fulfillment in Christ. In what way? By taking up our own cross, in adherence to his words, and being endowed with a mind that is lively and ready for action. For in having an implement upon the belt, that is, something made of wood, this is perhaps indirectly indicating to us the cross. The law is spiritual, and physical things are wont to serve as representations of the spiritual. For we are not in a state of uncleanness in the sight of God who has made things this way, but when we go to the latrine we rid ourselves of all waste from the stomach. But, as I just said, those things that can be perceived by the senses are also types and images of the spiritual. So it is necessary for us to empty ourselves of spiritual uncleanness, *“for the Lord God walks in the midst of the camp.”*

Christ likewise dwells and walks among us, and if he sees any shameful or unseemly thing within us, he immediately reacts against it. For the Holy Spirit of wisdom will flee from deceit-

80. Cf. Ps 19.12 (18.13 LXX).

81. Cf. Prv 10.14. Cyril has misquoted. Rather than “shame” the LXX reads *aisthēsis*, meaning the perception of the mind or senses. The confusion no doubt arose from the fact that the word here translated “shame” (*aischunās*) begins with the same three letters.

fulness, as it is written,⁸² and he will depart from foolish reasonings. But if he finds us thoroughly cleansed and pure, above all passions and defilements, he will most readily dwell within us and deliver us from the hands of our enemies. It therefore says, "Be holy, because I am holy";⁸³ and again, "Come out from there, and do not touch anything unclean, and I will receive you, says the Lord."⁸⁴ For those who have been completely purified our Lord Jesus Christ joyfully receives, through whom and with whom be glory to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

Concerning the stones that were plastered

1. The all-wise and divine Paul says that the people of old were instructed through the writings of Moses with regard to the mystery of Christ. This is indeed the case, and what he said is true. For if we transform the things revealed through Moses into reality, we shall discover within them the most beautiful matters for spiritual contemplation.

Now [665] if we have firmly grasped the literal sense, and also attend to the things expressed in figures, we would be heeding the prophet when he said, "Dig very deep for a dwelling place."⁸⁵ For in the shadows themselves we will find nothing that is truly fruitful and profitable, though we declare the commandments to be wholly without fault.⁸⁶ This is why the divine Moses placed a veil over his face, signifying, I believe, to those who are more perceptive, that the law is twofold. The true meaning is the inner one, whereas the shadow is presented as a manner of mask, and the things that are visible are a dispensable covering over the matters that are hidden.

So in Deuteronomy Moses teaches us that the instructors in the mysteries of the new covenant in Christ would at times

82. There seems to be no clear reference that Cyril has in mind, but 1 Pt 2.1 is a possibility.

83. Lv 19.2; 1 Pt 1.16.

84. Cf. Is 52.11; Ezek 20.34 LXX; 2 Cor 6.17.

85. Jer 49.30 (30.25 LXX).

86. Var. "but we declare the commandments to be totally unprofitable."

speak the word through himself, yet they would also give instruction respecting the real meaning and offer an exposition that opens up the literal sense by interpreting it more spiritually. This is what is written: *Moses and the elders of Israel gave command, saying, "Keep all these commandments that I command you this day. On the day when you cross over the Jordan into the land that the Lord your God is giving you, you shall set up for yourself large stones, and you shall coat them with plaster, and you shall write upon the stones all the words of this law once you cross over the Jordan, when you enter the land that the Lord the God of your fathers is giving you, a land flowing with milk and honey, as the Lord the God of your fathers told you. And when you cross over the Jordan, you shall set up these stones about which I command you this day on Mount Ebal, and you shall coat them with plaster. And there you shall build an altar to the Lord your God, an altar made of stones. You shall not use an iron tool on them. You shall build the altar to the Lord your God from whole stones. Then you shall offer up on it burnt offerings to the Lord your God. And you shall sacrifice a peace offering, and you shall eat and be filled, and rejoice before the Lord your God. And you shall write⁸⁷ upon these stones all this law."*⁸⁸

Note how he commanded that the words spoken by him with regard to things that would happen later were not to be treated casually, but were to be considered worthy of the most careful attention. These were the matters that were to be taught by the holy apostles.

I will now try to explain clearly each part of this as I am able.

2. It says that when they⁸⁹ had passed over the Jordan and marched into the much-desired promised land, having then set up large stones on a high place, they were to cover them with plaster and inscribe upon them all the law very clearly.

The great stones placed on high indicate to us the band of holy apostles, who are great, high, and conspicuous with regard to the truth. When it comes to virtue and the living of a glorious life in Christ, there are none equal to them; because of those things that are prominent among us, we find them to

87. Var. add "very clearly."

88. Dt 27.1-8.

89. Lit. "we."

come high above them all. For tell me: who has a mind that can match those holy and illustrious men, whom [668] Christ also called his own friends? For he said, "I no longer call you servants; you are my friends."⁹⁰ He also called them "the light of the world," and "the salt of the earth."⁹¹ He decreed that they should be seen to be honored with the same honor that was fitting for him. He appointed them to be doers of good, and set them forth as physicians for the whole world, saying, "Heal the sick, cast out demons, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead. Freely you have received; freely give."⁹² So the stones were large and set up on a mountain, for the conspicuousness of their glory and the prominence of their splendor make these men seem as though they have been placed on high, as on a mountain.

But who were those that set up the stones? Those who crossed the Jordan. Those who have come to believe in the holy Christ, and who have received an abundance of grace through holy baptism. These do indeed set up over themselves teachers and instructors in the mysteries, namely the disciples of our Savior, who are truly the holy and elect stones, concerning whom the prophetic oracle said to us, "Holy stones are rolled upon the ground."⁹³ For the divine disciples were, in a way, rolled forth to all those under heaven. They traversed the whole world, demonstrating to people everywhere the beauty of the godliness with which they were endowed, proclaiming the true pearl, the one most precious stone, which is Christ.

Then the stones that were coated with plaster were written upon, this being the writing of the law in a very clear manner. For in the holy apostles we find spiritual contemplations of matters in the law most clearly and visibly expressed, no longer foreshadowed in the letter, nor covered by the shadow that obscured, but clear and bright. For the instruction given by these saints is spiritual. And so they speak about the law in a way that makes it manifest. And this, I believe, is the significance of writing it clearly upon the plastered stones, as it is written.

90. Cf. Jn 15.14-15.

91. Mt 5.13-14.

92. Mt 10.8.

93. Zec 9.16 LXX.

So when the stones were set up, the law was put upon them. It said it was necessary to build the altar from other stones that were whole, that is, uncut and not inflicted with blows from an iron implement. And what was the reason for this? It is because Christ is the precious cornerstone, and he has been placed in the foundations of Zion.⁹⁴ For it is by him that we are held up, and we have him as a kind of secure base that cannot be shaken. And we ourselves are being built up as living stones into a spiritual house, a holy temple, into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.⁹⁵

Yet we also are no less like an altar. We have been assembled together in a spiritual unity, emitting the pleasing aroma of faith in Christ, offering up through him to God the Father the glory of our virtues as a manner of sweet-smelling incense. And so the divine Paul writes to us, "Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service."⁹⁶

So we ourselves are also stones, yet ones that are whole and that have not been struck. For, as I said, those who emit the aroma of Christ render the complete devotion of their minds, not being diverted by [66g] the things of the world, and no longer taking thought for the blows of profane and loathsome sins. But as Christ is not divided, so too are they single-minded and true, devoted to God alone, refusing to be divided between him and the things of the world and the flesh. Having devoted himself in this way to God, the holy Paul wrote, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."⁹⁷ So it is necessary to remember how God has revealed the same law to us as though on other stones, as he said, "If you make me an altar out of stones, you shall not build it with hewn stones, for if you use your tool on it, the stones are defiled."⁹⁸ The stones are therefore whole and unstruck in the way that we were just told.

It says, "*You shall eat and be filled there, and rejoice before the Lord*

94. Cf. Is 28.16; 1 Pt 2.16.

95. Cf. Eph 2.21-22.

96. Rom 12.1.

97. Phil 1.21.

98. Ex 20.25.

your God.” For to those who have now come to such glory, so as to be able to emit the aroma of Christ, to these it very appropriately further adds that they are to be filled with sacred and divine nourishment, and also to rejoice spiritually in the presence of God. This is fulfilled when in the churches mystical blessings are granted to those who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom and with whom be glory to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, now and always, and for ever and ever. Amen.

Concerning the election of Joshua

1. Having a right understanding of both the mystery of Christ and the nature of the Mosaic ministration, the wise John declared, “The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”⁹⁹ The law was set to bring wrath, and for those who committed a transgression, it imposed a grievous punishment that was both instant and indiscriminating. In general, it denounced base conduct and brought about the condemnation of sin. “For sin,” it says, “is not reckoned when there is no law,”¹⁰⁰ and also, “I would not have known sin except through the law.”¹⁰¹ But Christ forgives us our transgressions. For he justifies and sanctifies believers by grace, and he brings to fulfillment the promises made long ago to the fathers. Yet that both of these facts are true Paul made clear when he wrote, “The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”¹⁰² For he calls the shadow contained in the law “letter”; and the ministration in spirit and truth, the gospel ministration that Christ established for people throughout the whole world, he calls “Spirit.” Since the first was not faultless, it was therefore necessary later that place be found for a second. God made one obsolete, and promised a new one. So when Moses was removed, and taken out of the way, Christ sprang up, so to speak, and was declared to be leader over us, through whom and in whom we have been

99. Jn 1.17.

100. Rom 5.13.

101. Rom 7.7.

102. 2 Cor 3.6.

brought into the kingdom of heaven and shall receive the happy estate that lasts for unending ages, as we live a life that is pure and holy and free from all guilt.

Besides this, God has instructed us to be well disposed towards and mindful of those things [672] revealed through Moses long ago. For this is what was written: *Then Moses called Joshua and said to him in the presence of all Israel, "Be courageous and strong, for you will enter at the head of this people into the land that the Lord swore to give to our fathers, and you shall give it to them as their inheritance. And the Lord who goes with you will not leave you nor forsake you. Do not fear or be afraid."*¹⁰³

When the most excellent Moses was about to take his leave of human affairs and to be translated into the heavenly dwellings, the divine Joshua was appointed in his place and succeeded him as leader. For, as I said earlier, when the former old ministration of the letter and of the law came to an end, and was, in effect, taken out of the way, the Only-Begotten came down to us from heaven, and became one of us in nature. Although as God he has dominion over all, and in this respect possesses the highest and most resplendent honor, it is necessary that, on account of his likeness to us, he is seen to be called to rule over a kingdom. Therefore, he said, "I have been made king by him," meaning by God the Father, "upon Zion his holy mountain, declaring the decree of the Lord."¹⁰⁴

So then, as Moses has given way to the glory of Christ, no one should bring him into the midst again; the types should not exercise authority, nor should the shadow be brought to the fore. "The old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."¹⁰⁵ But if anyone should wish to do this, he ought to know that he is dishonoring the divine economy, and looks to be doing violence to God, since he is making void the great and noble mystery. For he who still adheres to the types after Jesus has been manifested will be removed far from those enrolled as saints, and will also lose his portion of the gifts freely given through Christ and have no share in them whatsoever.

¹⁰³. Dt 31.7-8.

¹⁰⁴. Ps 2.6-7.

¹⁰⁵. 2 Cor 5.17.

See that the divine Paul expressly reproves certain people in Galatia who were so disposed, when he writes, "O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? The only thing I want to learn from you is this: Did you receive the Spirit by doing the works of the law, or by faith in what you heard? Are you so foolish that having begun with the Spirit, you are now ending¹⁰⁶ with the flesh?"¹⁰⁷ To these words he then adds: "You have become estranged from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace. For through faith we await the hope of righteousness."

Now the great Moses was indeed a faithful man and one of the most eminent. Yet he was a servant, and this was the limit of his status, being a mediator and minister of the law that condemned. But he who was the Lord of Moses¹⁰⁸ came and brought us the grace that justifies. So now, let the law keep silent, that which was the accuser of sin and the ministry of condemnation, through which God bound all over to sin, so that he might have mercy upon all, as it is written.¹⁰⁹

2. What was it that the great Moses said to Joshua? "*Be courageous and strong, for you will enter at the head of this people into the land that the Lord swore to give to our fathers, and you shall give it to them as their inheritance.*"

Now observe the foresight of the law. [673] Moses was not ignorant of the glory of the Savior, his incomparable excellence in respect of all that is holy, or rather in respect of every rational creature. He knew of his irresistible power, his almighty and unconquerable authority, and so, in effect, he also looked with wonder upon the enemy falling, death losing its energy, Satan fleeing, and the ancient and invincible serpent rendered fearful and beaten, the sinful mouth stopped up, lepers cleansed, demons trembling, and the raging sea made calm with a single word. Moses was aware that the law given through himself justified nobody, and that it was impossible for the blood of

106. Or "being perfected."

107. Gal 3.1-3, followed by Gal 5.4-5.

108. Var. "Lord of all."

109. Cf. Rom 11.32; Gal 3.22.

bulls and goats to take away sin.¹¹⁰ But our Lord Jesus Christ will redeem the world from its former offenses, and as he is the truth, the one who is by nature holy, he will sanctify with his own blood those who believe, and he will make them superior to death and corruption. And so he will give them entrance into the kingdom of heaven, the truly desirable and holy land where they shall abide on high, the beautiful city in heaven, the church of the firstborn, of which the designer and builder is God.¹¹¹

That God the Father would help the Son in absolutely every way and would work alongside him when he became one of us, Moses clearly affirmed when he added: "*And the Lord, who goes with you, will not leave you nor forsake you.*" Now the Son is indeed all-powerful and has incontestable authority, since he is by nature God. But he is said to be helped by the Father on account of his humanity, and this was fitting due to his being in the form of a servant, and due to the very manner of the economy of his Incarnation. And so the Son, that it might be believed that he became one of us, is formed with the proper weakness that pertains to humankind, saying to God the Father in heaven, "You will not abandon my soul to the grave, nor will you allow your holy one to see corruption."¹¹²

3. Now the teaching of the law according to its spiritual interpretation was doubtless not made known to anyone before the advent of Christ, but he later shone forth and was the cause of much wonder, appearing, as it were, in the sight of great and small when the Holy Spirit descended upon us, through whom we also understand the deep things of God. This is clear from the following passage which reads: *And Moses wrote all these words of this law in a book, and he gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi who carry the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and to the elders of the people of Israel. And Moses commanded them that day, saying, "At the end of seven years, during the year of release, at the Feast of Tabernacles, when all Israel comes together to appear before the Lord your God in the place that the Lord shall choose, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Assemble the people, the men and the women and the*

110. Cf. Heb 10.4.

111. Cf. Heb 11.10.

112. Ps 16.10 (15.10 LXX); Acts 2.27.

children and the foreigner¹¹³ who is in your town, that they might hear and learn to fear [676] the Lord their God and that they should obey all the words of this law.”¹¹⁴

Note that Moses wrote down the law, but he also enjoined those chosen as priests, as well as the elders, that when seven years had passed, at the time of release, at the Feast of Tabernacles, they were to assemble all the people, old and young, both women and children, and then to read it to those gathered together. From the fact that the reading should take place after seven years, one might learn that a considerable amount of time would pass until Christ should appear and the time for him to become a human being should arrive. For the number seven in divine Scripture is symbolic of a multitude, as I believe we find when it says, “The barren woman has given birth to seven children,”¹¹⁵ and also, “Do not ever trust your enemy, for there are seven abominations in his heart,”¹¹⁶ and in a certain place the teller of proverbs said, “The righteous person will fall seven times, and rise again.”¹¹⁷

Note that in the seven years before the time of release, that is, during the time before the advent, the law was not read. Even if one might perhaps have read it, to read only part of it is the same as not being able to understand it at all. It became known, however, to both great and small, as I said, once the time of release had come.

The law commanded those of ancient times, saying, “Every seven years you shall grant a release, and this is how you shall do it: you shall remit every private debt which your neighbor owes you.”¹¹⁸ And again: “If you acquire a Hebrew servant, he shall serve you for six years, but in the seventh year you shall set him free.”¹¹⁹ So at the end of the ages, which is, as it were, in the seventh year, our Lord Jesus Christ released us from our debts, forgave those who had sinned, and freely pardoned those who owed

113. Lit. “proselyte.”

114. Dt 31.9–12.

115. Sir 12.10.

116. Prv 26.25.

117. Prv 24.16.

118. Dt 15.1–2.

119. Ex 21.2.

him anything, according to the parable in the Gospel. Those who were slaves of sin, bound to the yoke of Satan, he made to appear glorious and resplendent by the Spirit of freedom.

The year of release was proclaimed at the time of Tabernacles, which points to the mystery of the resurrection, when the tabernacle, which is the body, of each one upon the earth will be erected. For when Christ was raised to life from the dead, having trampled down death and plundered Hades, "saying to those in bonds, 'Come out,' and to those in darkness, 'Show yourselves,'"¹²⁰ and then beautifying human nature by the Holy Spirit as the firstfruits of the human race and of those being re-created for holiness, he breathed upon the holy apostles and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."¹²¹ Then the eyes of our minds were opened, and then we were enlightened, and we came to understand the law that¹²² had remained obscure since ancient times, that which had been unknown to any of those of old. We were also then gathered together from the corners of the earth to the place he chose, which is the church, and to us who are now there the elect and holy instructors and teachers of mysteries interpret the law expressed in types and shadows. And so the [677] divine Paul clearly transposes the types into a contemplation of the spiritual meaning, and writes, "For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled upon those who were defiled, sanctify with regard to the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ!"¹²³

Seeing that when the people of Israel slaughtered the lamb, and attended to shadows, they were pointing to the figure of the mystery in Christ, Paul again said, "Christ our Passover has been sacrificed."¹²⁴ To others he also writes, "Tell me, you who wish to be under the law, do you not hear what the law says? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one from the maid-servant, and one from the free woman. But the one that was from the maidservant was born according to the flesh, while the

120. Is 49.9.

121. Jn 20.22.

122. Var. "we alone came to understand that which . . ."

123. Heb 9.14.

124. 1 Cor 5.7; var. add "for us."

one from the free woman was born through a promise. These things may be taken allegorically, for the women are two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai, and bears children for slavery; this is Hagar. Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem that is above is free; she is our mother."¹²⁵ So now, being instructed in the spiritual sense of the divine law, we receive it among us with reverence.

Yet that the importance¹²⁶ of the ministration expressed in types and shadows would later be curtailed, Moses also showed by means of a figure. For it is written, *When Moses finished writing all the words of this law in a book until they were complete, he gave command to the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, "Take this book, and put it at the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord our God."*¹²⁷ Note how he commanded that the law should be laid in one particular part of the ark and not right at the center of it, inasmuch as when the new revelations through Christ came to be, for which it was necessary that the more ancient ordinance should give way, it gave them a place, as it were, or rather it was moved out of the midst, so that that which was coming¹²⁸ might be brought in. It was not in fact removed from the holy ark, for the law given through Moses is accepted within the church, though it is not assigned first place. It was restricted, and placed to the side, giving way, as I said, to the incomparably superior revelations, that is, the divine revelations of the gospel, by means of which Christ has instructed us in the knowledge of God and of all virtue, through whom and with whom be glory to God the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

125. Gal 4.21–26.

126. Lit. "power."

127. Dt 31.24–26.

128. Var. "that which was better."

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